

John Fowles's theory of The Garden of Eden

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Introduction

My first contact with John Fowles was when I read one of his earliest published novels *The French Lieutenants Woman*. I immediately recognised Fowles' frequent and unconventional usage of Christian symbolism. Therefore I devoted my C-essay to examining this subject in three of his earlier novels *The French Lieutenants Woman*, *The Magus*, and his short story collection *The Ebony Tower*. The Christian symbolism discussed in that paper was his usage of the metaphor of the tree, the Christian symbolism of the cross and crucifixion and the Bible's story of the Garden of Eden. This essay, however, attempts to further explore Fowles' usage and appliance of the Garden of Eden and its concept of the male and female.

In *The Aristos*, a philosophical work, published at the beginning of the writer John Fowles's career, John Fowles undertakes to explain some of the ideas and the philosophy that operates at the basis of his writings. One of these is his interpretation of the Garden of Eden, which not only reveals itself to be a criticism of Christianity but also an elaborate theory in sexual contrasts. This essay is based on this theory.

As will be shown five conclusions can be drawn when studying the theory more closely:

1. Fowles has a religious and sexual conception of the garden of Eden
2. He has a concept of male and female behaviour, which he defines as Adam and Eve behaviour
3. Fowles has a concept of male Gods and female Gods which he defines as Adam Gods and Eve Gods
4. Furthermore he has a concept of Adam women and Eve men
5. Fowles claims to be a feminist.

The first chapter is an analysis of Fowles theory of The Garden of Eden. Subsequently, in the second chapter the essay tries to establish the fact that the Garden of Eden theme actually is a common theme in Fowles's fiction. Furthermore, in the third and fourth chapter the characterisation of the Fowlesian hero and heroine are studied respectively in order to display how Fowles ideas of Adam and Eve apply to these characters. In the fifth chapter the essay looks more closely into Fowles's usage of his own concept of Adam men and Eve women in his narratives. A further analysis of Fowles's concept of male and female gods and how he uses it in his novels will be undertaken in the sixth chapter. Eventually the essay will attempt to describe and analyse what could be understood to be Fowles' concept of feminism and how this concept reveals itself in his works.

The critical approach is primarily thematic but also feminist. The purpose of the essay is to investigate and analyse Fowles's theory of The Garden of Eden and how it is used in his novels. The theory in itself has not been widely studied. However, many critics have discussed his characterisation of the heroine and other themes relevant to this essay's theme which has made it possible to make a sufficiently nuanced and valid criticism of Fowles theory of The Garden of Eden and, its importance on his novels.

The thesis of the essay is that Fowles, throughout his novels, applies his theory of The Garden of Eden to the characters and themes of his novels. Superficially Fowles wants to convey a feminist message to the reader, but his concept of feminism, as outlined in his novels is inconsistent. Equally his criticism of Christianity is so thorough and consistent and interweaved in his ideas of masculinity and femininity that it is possible to regard the theory and his appliance of it towards his characters more as a criticism of conventional religion than as feminism.

For a thorough understanding of John Fowles' I've read all of his novels and short stories, his philosophical work *The Aristos* and his autobiographical novella "The Tree". However, for a deeper analysis of characters I've concentrated on the first and last novels *The Collector* and *The Maggot* and his self biographical novel *Daniel Martin*.

The Theory of Adam and Eve in *The Aristos*

One of John Fowles's earliest works *The Aristos* is a comprehensive account of the philosophical ideas and perceptions underlying recurrent themes of his fiction. This work is an invaluable source of information to the reader who wants to dig deeper into the mentality of the author behind the Fowlesian canon. John Fowles has, very suitably called it; a self-portrait in ideas.¹ One of the topics presented in *The Aristos* is his personal theory on Adam and Eve. Fowles supplies us with a great deal of information on the ideological value that these figures carry. In order to convey a sufficient understanding of the subject the comprehensive chapter is recited below:

97 The male and female are the two most powerful biological principles; and their smooth interaction in society is one of the chief signs of social health. In this respect our world shows, in spite of the now general political emancipation of women considerable sickness; and most of this sickness arises from the selfish tyranny of the male.²

98 I interpret the myth of the temptation of Adam in this way. Adam is hatred of change and futile nostalgia for the innocence of animals. The serpent is imagination, the power to compare, self-consciousness. Eve is the assumption of human responsibility, of the need for progress. The garden of Eden is an impossible dream. The fall is the essential process of evolution.³ The God of Genesis is a personification of Adam's resentment.⁴

99 Adam is stasis, or conservatism, Eve is kinesis, or progress. Adam societies are ones in which the man and the father, male gods, exact strict obedience to established institutions and norms of behaviour, as during a majority of the periods of history in our era. The Victorian is a typical such period. Eve societies are those in which the woman and the mother, female gods, encourage innovation and experiment, and fresh definitions, aims, modes of feeling. The Renaissance and our own are typical such ages.⁵

100 There are of course Adam women and Eve men; singularly few, among the world's progressive thinkers have not belonged to the latter category⁶

¹Sollisch, James W. "The Passion of Existence: John Fowles's *The Ebony Tower*" *Critique:-Studies-in-Contemporary-Fiction* 25:1 1983:2

²Fowles, John. *The Aristos*, 5th ed. London: Pan Books, 1993

³John Haegert quotes the unrevised version which has a slightly different definition of the Garden of Eden and the Fall: 'the garden of Eden is an impossible dream, a parades of the past; the fall is the essential *processus* of evolution, and would be much better termed the Move.' Haegert, John. "Memoirs of a deconstructive Angel: The Heroine as Mantissa in the Fiction of John Fowles" *Contemporary Literature* 27:2 1986, Summer: 160- 181.

⁴Fowles, 1993:165

⁵Fowles, 1993:165-166

⁶Fowles, 1993 :166

101 The petty, cruel and still prevalent antifeminism of Adam dominated mankind (the very term mankind is revealing) is a long afterglow of the male's once important physical superiority and greater utility in the battle for survival. To the Adam in man, woman is no more than a rapable receptacle. This male association of femininity with rapability extends far beyond the female body. Progress and innovation are rapable; anything not based on brute power is rapable. All progressive philosophies are feminist. Adam is a princeling in a mountain castle; raids and fortifications, his power and his own prestige, obsess him.⁷

102 But if Eve had the intelligence to trick Adam out of his foolish dream in the Garden of Eden, she also had the kindness to stick by him afterwards; and it is this aspect of the female principle- tolerance, a general scepticism towards the Adam belief that might is right- that is the most valuable for society. Every mother is an evolutionary system in microcosm; she has no choice but to love what is- her child, ugly or arrogant, criminal or selfish, stupid or deformed. Motherhood is the most fundamental of all trainings in tolerance; and tolerance, as we have still to learn, is the most fundamental of all human wisdoms.⁸

At a first reading this interpretation of the Edenic myth seems to embrace an air of pro-feminism and democracy in its insistence on equality and unconditional love for humanity. However, a closer reading raises some questions about the author and his strong convictions regarding the human condition. What does this outline actually tell us about John Fowles's perception of men and women in general? After all, what we have just read must also be regarded as a rather dogmatic theory in sexual contrasts.

The reader is provided with plenty of information on Adams typical characteristics which can be apprehended as a rather dark depiction of the male. One important perception of Adam is his strong hatred of change.⁹ He is the severe father, who demands obedience and rules at the cost of personal freedom.¹⁰ Adam men, as well as women of both categories are excluded from the category of progressive thinking.¹¹ Adam disrespects women. Fowles describes the whole of Adam dominated mankind as antifeminist.¹² Adam is, in this context, illustrated as a "masculine, vehement tyrant" over Eve, "obsessed with power and prestige; a true fascist".¹³ He rapes Eve, metaphorically and literally as Eve and all that she embodies exists only as a

⁷Fowles, 1993 :166

⁸Fowles, 1993:166-167

⁹Fowles, 1993:165

¹⁰Fowles, 1993:166

¹¹Fowles, 1993:166

¹²Fowles, 1993:166

¹³Fowles, 1993:165-166

“rapable receptacle” to him.¹⁴ Fowles, moreover describes the extreme Adam; or man, as a narcissist. He calls him: “A princeling in a mountain castle”¹⁵ Adam is very much linked to the Christian God. The Victorian Age which is the Golden Age for Christianity is therefore exemplified as a typical Adam-dominated society. According to Fowles the garden of Eden God personifies Adam’s resentment.¹⁶ The Garden of Eden, is described as Adam’s dream, and not Eve’s, therefore Adam is spiritually closer than Eve to the Christian God; the God of the Garden of Eden.¹⁷

The text accordingly supplies a great deal of information on its concept of Eve. Whereas Adam is described as stasis and hatred of change, Eve symbolises progress, the need for progress and the need to control progress.¹⁸ Likewise Eve societies -as opposed to Adam societies’s craving for rules and order- encourage innovation and aesthetic freedom.¹⁹ Despite her role as a progressive force Eve women, no less than Adam men and Adam women, are excluded from being great progressive thinkers.²⁰ The greatest of female virtues is according to the theory that of Eve’s tolerance: her ability to love and tolerate all; characteristics that radically contrasts Adam’s tyranny, fascism and narcissism.²¹ Eve is according to this theory intelligent. She uses her intelligence lead Adam out of the Garden of Eden. ²² The theory links Eve to its perception of the Serpent. Characteristics enlisted to personify Eve, such as innovation and experiment, fresh definitions, aims, modes of feeling’ are quite similar to the characteristics of the Serpent which are imagination, the power to compare and self-consciousness.²³ Adam embodies God and the spiritual and Eve

¹⁴Fowles, 1993:166

¹⁵Fowles, 1993:166

¹⁶Fowles, 1993:165

¹⁷Fowles, 1993:165-166

¹⁸Fowles, 1993:165-166

¹⁹Fowles, 1993:166

²⁰Fowles, 1993:166

²¹Fowles, 1993:166-167

²²Fowles, 1993:166

²³Fowles, 1993:165-166

humanity and the carnal. She is described as “kinesis” and as “the assumption of human responsibility”.²⁴ Further support for this interpretation lies in the fact that according to this theory the archetypal Eve is not, in contrast to Adam, a part of the Garden of Eden. She is instead Adam’s help out of it.²⁵

Another interesting aspect of this theory is Fowles’s relationship to religion. He has in many contexts, including *The Aristos* declared himself to be an atheist. However, here he chooses to use Biblical metaphors to distinguish between different kinds of Gods. Hence, he suggests that also Gods, even religions, can be male or female. Fowles’s reference to the Victorian age as a period ruled by male values and male gods, makes it possible to interpret Christianity as an Adamite religion. The theory argues that female gods encourage progress and innovation. However, it remains uncertain which religions actually are referred to here.²⁶

The theory furthermore displays a concept of Adam women and Eve men. Eve men have a dimension which Eve women lack, the potentiality to become great progressive artists and thinkers.²⁷

It is possible to understand this text as a feminist proclamation. Adam-dominated mankind is described as a metaphorical rapist of Eve and all that she embodies. Eve values are described as preferable human assets. Progressive philosophers and thinkers are according to this theory all feminists.²⁸

A thorough reading of the Adam and Eve theory inevitably raises the question of if and how this theory is applied to Fowles’s other narratives? Is the myth of The Garden of Eden used as a metaphor also in these contexts, and in that case how does Fowles apply his theory of Adam and Eve to the portrayal of his characters? What significance does the division between male and female gods have on these characters? What role does religion play in this context? Is feminism a didactic element in Fowles’s fiction, and in that case, in what way? Naturally, the passage on Adam and Eve must be interpreted as a theory of archetypal

²⁴Fowles, 1993:165

²⁵Fowles, 1993:165

²⁶Fowles, 1993:166

²⁷Fowles, 1993:166

²⁸Fowles, 1993:166

extremes, not as generalising between characters. Nevertheless it does supply invaluable background information for the reader who wants to investigate further into the philosophical ideas behind Fowles's portrayal of men and women, and their gods.

The Garden of Eden in Fowles's Fiction

It is possible to perceive that Fowles novels and short stories contain elements of *The Aristos*' concept of the Garden of Eden. *The Collector*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *The Magus*, *The Ebony Tower*, *Daniel Martin*, *Mantissa* and *A Maggot* all seem to deal with the chasm behind this myth. In fact, it is so central in his fictions that even his autobiographical text, *The Tree* to an enormous extent deals with the chasm between what he, in *The Aristos*, apprehends to be Evistic and Adamite life principles. The Fowlesian prototypal Eden is, as will be further illustrated, reflected even in the narrative structure of his fiction. His stories are often built up around metaphorical gardens of Eden with questing Adam characters, guided out of Christianity both by mesmerising Eve characters and sometimes also by mentors enacting the part as quasi-divine serpents. Fowles creates these Garden of Eden analogues not only in green, mythic, enclosures, but also in confining Edens, serving as deterrent travesties of a Christian utopia. The fall does, in *The Aristos*, assume the face of a process, in which the hero, and in some cases also his mirroring heroine, evolve into awareness of the non-existence of God. The hero is banned, or released from his prison by a Godlike figure that represents the Christian God. Conchis, which is the magus of the story, thus plays a Godgame with the hero, with himself cast as God and the hero cast as Adam so as to dissociate his guest from his former destructive illusions of God. Fowles confirms this interpretation of his novel *The Magus* in the preface where he declares:

The Magus in particular -which had the working title of "The Godgame"- presents us with a wizard like magus who has staged an utopic Eden, which contains all the Edenic prerogatives; the green enclosure, the enticing Eves, the sexual services, and of course the illusions, all for the hero's benefit. If there was some central scheme beneath the (more Irish than Greek) stew of intuitions about the nature of human existence -and of fiction- it lies perhaps in the alternative title, whose rejection I sometimes regret: *The Godgame*. I did intend Conchis to exhibit a series of masks representing human notions of God, from the supernatural to the jargon-ridden scientific... The destruction of such illusions seems to me still an eminently humanist aim:²⁹

²⁹Fowles, John. *The Magus*, New York: Dell Publishing, 1985:10

One of Fowles critics, Foster, does in his bibliography on Fowles, contemplate on this narrative technique and describes it as a Quest theme in *The Magus* and even calls it a Fowlesian urtext as it insipiently recurs in all Fowles novels and novellas:

The Conchis urtext, or the master story, which lies behind all these variations involves certain basic elements: a young, comparatively helpless woman whom the main character will find attractive and sympathetic, a second woman... elements of mystery, even danger, the selfcontained green world of romance and the elderly puppeteer who controls all the actions by his underlings... the storyline, moreover, may also be seen as the Fowlesian urtext. The quest romances will follow similar paths throughout his career: "The Ebony Tower" (The most precise compliment), The French Lieutenant's Woman, Mantissa, and A Maggot, all involve similar elements.

James W. Sollish has written an article on the passion of existence in Fowles short story collection *The Ebony Tower*. He pays close attention to the Adam and Eve myth which he argues is traceable in all these short stories, and also in *The Magus* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. He detects the myth in setting as well as in theme in these stories and likewise argues that the same theme recurs again and again in the Fowlesian canon.³⁰

The sexual fall undergone in Fowles' Eden serves as a preliminary metaphor for the spiritual fall which, in accordance with the philosophy outlined in *The Aristos*, is a process of emancipation from God. However, as Heagart, another critic, interestingly enough points out, the first Fowlesian novel, *The Collector* seems to revolve primarily around the fall of Eve. The green garden awakens Cleggs passion and love, but when Miranda wants to give herself to Clegg the Puritan morality in Clegg is stired to a fringe where suddenly everything is altered. Miranda's apprehension of God is also altered. Her renunciation and hatred of God intensifies after her sexual fall and eventually culminates in her death. Although she, from the beginning of the novel, held a wish to believe in a good God, on her deathbed she is ready to realise: "It's as if the lights have fused. I'm here in black truth. God is impotent. He can't love us. He hates us because he can't love us".

³¹The other novels however, mainly treat Adam's fall. Throughout *The French Lieutenants Woman*, Charles' encounters with Sarah enable his Victorian self to subside and after they finally make love the process of

³⁰Sollish, 1983:4

³¹Fowles, John. *The Collector* London: Pan Books, 1986:255

emancipation from the Victorian God culminates in the Exeter church where Charles reaches an ultimate understanding of the non-existence of God:

And Charles thought: if they were truly dead, if there were no afterlife, what should I care of their view of me? They would not know, they could not judge. Then he made the great leap: *they do not know, they cannot judge*. Now what he was throwing off haunted, and profoundly damaged his age... What he saw now was like a glimpse of another world: a new reality, a new causality, a new creation.³²

Nicholas in *The Magus*, undergoes a fantastical, indescribably lucid and terrifying learning process which leads to an ultimate understanding of the conundrum of God.

There were no watching eyes. The windows were as blank as they looked. The theatre was empty. It was not a theatre. They had perhaps told her it was a theatre, and she had believed them, and I had believed her. Perhaps it had all been to bring me to this, to give me a lesson and final ordeal... the task, as in *L'Astree*, of turning lions and unicorns and magic and other mythical monsters into stone statues... It was logical, the perfect climax to the godgame. They had absconded, we were alone.³³

The hero in Fowles last novel *A Maggot* has already come to this conclusion and is conducting a Godgame himself, with the prerogatives of Eden, an Eve, a questing Adam, the threat of a condemning Christian father, whom he now has abandoned forever, the evil Christian society, and green mythic enclosures. He has come a long way from the “calibanity” of Clegg and is subsequently able to teach Rebecca to realise the truth about God:

Go to the window Fanny'...'Now open the shutter and look out'...'Do you see the Redeemer on His throne in the heavens, beside His Father?'
She looks back to where he sits. 'You know not, sir.'
'Then what instead?'
'Nothing. The night.'
'And in that night?'
She glances quickly out of the window. 'Nothing but the stars. The sky is come clear.'
'Do the beams of the brightest shake?'
Again she looks. 'Yes, sir.'
'Do you know why?'
'No, sir'
'They shake with laughter, Fanny, for they mock you. They have mocked you since the day of your birth. They will mock you to your day of death. You are but a painted shadow to them, and all your world. It matters not to them whiter you have faith in Christ or not. Are sinner or saint, drab or duchess. Man or woman, young or old, it is all one. Whether

³²Fowles, John. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* Pan Books, 1969:315- 316

³³Fowles, 1985: 666- 667

Hell or Heaven awaits you, good fortune or bad, pain or bliss, to them it is equal... 'Shall I tell thee why they scorn?' She is silent. 'Because thoust dost not scorn them back.' ³⁴

In *Mantissa*, which like the rest of Fowles' canon is abundant with Edenic imagery and which is loaded with dialogue concerning the schism between Evism and Adamism held between the writer and his muse, the philosophical criticism of Christianity is not preceded by a fall but finds expression mainly in the various archetypal characters who personify Fowles's concept of the Christian God in confrontation with Eve: Erato. Examples of these are the stout Staff sister, old Doodah and others.

The usage of the Edenic garden is, as has been displayed, frequent in Fowles narratives. It is perhaps possible to argue, as John Haegert does, that Fowles's interpretation of Genesis's garden of Eden in *The Aristos* provides the fundamental myth behind all of his fiction.³⁵

³⁴Fowles, John. *A Maggot* Vintage, 1996:56

³⁵Haegert, 1986:164

Adam Men in Fowles's Fiction

Much has been written concerning Fowles's often stereotypical portrayal of women, whereas his portrayal of men has raised considerably less interest. Nevertheless, Fowles's characterisation of men is also an interesting phenomenon from a critical point of view. The prototypal Adam who in *The Aristos* is described as static, orderly, controlling, obedient towards established institutions, authoritarian, tyrannical, narcissistic, antifeminist, philosophically constipated and God-representing is reflected in many Fowlesian male characters. A closer analysis of the characterisation of the Fowlesian male hero reveals many such similarities, but it also discloses an interesting narrative consistency concerning the differences. The fall, which according to *The Aristos* is a process of evolution, not only moulds the male characters individually, but affects the whole range of Fowlesian heroes, and its primal concern seems to be evolution away from the Adam prototype.

The extreme typical Adam for example, finds its embodiment primarily in the characterisation of Fowles's very first hero, Clegg. Thomas C. Foster, in his biography of Fowles, very accurately describes Clegg's person as: "a kind of worst-case scenario of the male side of personality running amok: selfish, rapacious, obsessed with control, sexually driven."³⁶

Adam's stasis or hatred of change is partly illustrated by the early Fowlesian hero's mania for collecting, which could be interpreted as an embodiment of his desire to preserve and conserve life. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Charles's hobby of collecting fossils is obviously a metaphor for his conservative nature. Jacqueline Costello points out that in *Daniel Martin* Dan is portrayed as a collector not only of

³⁶Foster, Tomas C. *Understanding John Fowles*. Columbia 1994:32

orchids, but also of women.³⁷ However, in this respect Clegg from *The Collector* must be considered the most extreme. He embodies stasis and resistance towards change in his total being. It is such a great part of his nature that even his name becomes "The Collector". His butterfly collection and his newly started collection of women both illustrate his clinical nature and his inability to change. Miranda writes in her diary: "I could scream abuse at him all day long; he wouldn't mind at all. It's me he wants, my look, my outside; not my emotions or my mind or soul or even my body. Not anything *human*. He is a collector. That's the great dead thing about him."³⁸ She frequently describes Clegg and his world as dead. On another occasion she describes the dead atmosphere of Clegg's world: "Upstairs, bedrooms, lovely rooms in themselves, but all fusty, unlived in. A strange dead air about everything."³⁹ His unwillingness to live and evolve is moreover illustrated by his passivity and by the way he reduces himself to watching Miranda. He is constantly waiting and watching.⁴⁰ Clegg himself realises this and contemplates on his relationship to his victim: "I could have used the pad. Done what I liked, but I am not that sort, definitely not that sort at all... What she never understood was that with me it was having. Having her was enough. Nothing needed doing. I just wanted to have her, and safe at last."⁴¹ His fear of action is especially illustrated by his enormous fear of sexuality. Miranda's violent or cunning escape attempts do not really frighten him, but when she uses sexuality he is terrified. In Fowles's world, sexuality is often preceded by the process of a mental fall, and thus becomes synonymous with activity, progress and evolution. Therefore, Clegg, who represents death and stagnation, is bound to abhor it. Sexuality, imagination, innovation and creativity are also inseparable concepts in Fowles's novels. This is especially displayed in his frequent usage of muses as important inspirational sources in the act of creation and evolution. But Fowles's early heroes are often unimaginative. Charles, Nicholas and Clegg are

³⁷Costello, Jacqueline, "When Worlds Collide: Freedom, Freud, and Jung in Fowle's *Daniel Martin*", 1990: 22:1, 34

³⁸Fowles, 1986: 161

³⁹Fowles, 1986: 126-127

⁴⁰Fowles, 1986: 76, 161

⁴¹Fowles, 1986: 95

all good examples of this. Miranda for example once describes Clegg as “slow, lifeless and unimaginative”⁴². Likewise, his formal language and lack of empathy for Miranda bear witness to the unimaginativeness of his personality.

Like his prototype in *The Aristos*, Clegg-Adam is scientific and well organised. His prison is meticulously planned, and his every move is logically accounted for. He is proud of his ability to organise and tells the reader: “But I would like to see Critchley organise what I organised last summer and carry it through. I am not going to blow my own trumpet, but it was no small thing.”⁴³ Even his burial of Miranda is, as the critic John Neary also points out, conducted in a scientific manner: “She is in that box I made, under the apple trees. It took me three days to dig the hole... I did it scientific: I planned what had to be done and ignored my natural feelings.”⁴⁴ Order and rules make him feel safe and under control.⁴⁵ His very imprisonment of Miranda illustrates this. She is literally imprisoned in his orderliness and in his rules.⁴⁶ Duty and self-control are also characteristics of the early Fowlesian hero. For example, Charles’ in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*’s greatest battle is between Earnestina and her father, who represents duty, and the freedom from duty represented by Sarah. Nicholas, in *The Magus*, however has developed a sense of dislike for duty and useless self-control, but recaptures it in his many psychological obligations towards Conchis. Even in this respect, Clegg is the most extreme of all Fowlesian heroes. Clegg often sees it as his duty to suppress Miranda. In one of his dreams he even finds it his duty to suffocate her.⁴⁷ He can not see that his self-control, which he believes makes him a nobler person, is the very key to his unnaturalness and his destructiveness.

⁴²Fowles, 1986: 127

⁴³Fowles, 1986: 22

⁴⁴Fowles, 1986: 282

Neary, John *Something and Nothingness: The Fiction of John Updike and John Fowles*. Carbondale, Southern Illinois. 1992:34

⁴⁵Fowles, 1986: 57

⁴⁶Fowles, 1986: 50

⁴⁷Fowles, 1986: 77

The tyrannical and fascistic Adamit characteristics are also extremely prominent in Clegg's character. To emphasise the rigidly militant aspect of his male personality Fowles makes him identify himself with the Gestapo.⁴⁸ Fowles often associates the extreme male world with Hitler and the Nazis. This is done in *The Collector*, as well as in *Daniel Martin*, with reference to Dan's father, and as an illustration of the inhumanity of Conchis illusory world in *The Magus*.⁴⁹ Thomas C. Foster notices Fowles's frequent references to the Nazis and argues as follows: 'For Fowles the Holocaust stands as the informing historical moment, revealing many things that are wrong with society in his time: insensitivity, cruelty, the urge to violence, the will to power. Nazis and their victims will appear frequently, and not always metaphorically, in his later works'⁵⁰ Clegg, unsurprisingly, also tells us that he has formerly served in the army.⁵¹ Violence signifies the extreme Adam. Likewise, Clegg is capable of feeling passion only through violence. One example of this is his desire to touch Miranda's hair and his inability to do so unless by force. "Her hair was always beautiful. I never saw such beautiful hair. Often I had an itch to touch it. Just to stroke it, to feel it. It gave me a chance when I put the gag on."⁵² Clegg is fascism. He and his rigidly undemocratic world is a terrifying embodiment of the fascism of Adam portrayed in *The Aristos*.

Clegg is also inevitably the greatest narcissist in the Fowlesian canon, totally incapable of empathy. We are told that he feels for Miranda. He is upset when he sees her cry, and he believes that: "what she felt, I felt". However, his actions, or rather lack of actions, prove his total emotional insufficiency.⁵³ The extreme narcissistic manner of his personality is illustrated by his preference for masturbation rather than sexual contact with Miranda. Nicholas in *The Magus* has a similar problem, although in a less extreme manner. He is also, like Charles, very much concerned with himself and his own sexuality. Foster describes Nicholas as:

⁴⁸Fowles, 1986: 43

⁴⁹Fowles, John. *Daniel Martin* New York, Penguin Books, 1977 : 81,88-89

⁵⁰Foster, 1994: 36

⁵¹Fowles, 1986: 98

⁵²Fowles, 1986: 61

⁵³Fowles, 1986: 47,78

“essentially a masturbatory personality. His narcissism is tied to his more generally egocentric view of the world: in sex, as in all other things, Nicholas is the centre of the universe. Other people scarcely count, except as figures in his fantasy.”⁵⁴ This description fits Clegg as well, although his narcissism in many senses is worse than Nicholas's. It is total, he can not love. His concept of love is truly a fairy tale where he is the lover and Miranda is the object whose emotions are totally irrelevant. It does not even matter to him that she hates him, because he is the only person who truly exists in his own world.

Clegg is also the greatest antifeminist of all Fowles's Adams in the Edenic analogue. His attitude towards women and his treatment of Miranda display various levels of contempt for women. His chauvinism reveals itself for example in his tendency to romanticise his superiority over her. For instance, Clegg admits that he fancies the idea of being much taller than her and that he enjoys the thought of her sleeping in the room below him.⁵⁵ He also explains to us that he likes the idea of her as his crippled wife and he as her providing husband.⁵⁶ Clegg also displays a very conservative attitude towards women in general. As Foster also notices, Clegg sees women as either idealised or fallen.⁵⁷ When Miranda proves to be a sexual being he can feel nothing but contempt for her, in his eyes she is fallen. In his dreams, however, she is passive, subjected, silently and childishly sitting on his knees.⁵⁸ Moreover, his desire to suppress her also takes brutal, violent forms. In many respects his treatment of her resembles a classical wife batterer. He views himself as her guardian and her friend, but suppresses her selfhood by the constant threat of his physical superiority. It pleases him to see her ill because it makes her weak and him strong.⁵⁹ Even if he seldom actually abuses her his manner is threatening and rapacious. He frequently dreams of abusing her.⁶⁰ He practically, in his own

⁵⁴Foster, 1994: 52

⁵⁵Fowles, 1986: 50, 30

⁵⁶Fowles, 1986: 49

⁵⁷Foster, 1994: 32

⁵⁸Fowles, 1986: 36

⁵⁹Fowles, 1986: 113

⁶⁰Fowles, 1986: 36, 10, 77

way, rapes and abuses her with his camera which throughout the whole novel is his principal substitute for physical contact with Miranda. His violence explodes after Miranda's unsuccessful seduction attempt. Clegg explains: 'I said, all right, I'm going to teach you a lesson... so I got my pictures. I took her till I had no more bulbs left. I got the pictures developed and printed that night. The best were with her face cut off...The tied hands to the bed made what they call an interesting motif.'⁶¹ Both Charles in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Nicholas in *The Magus* have similar perceptions of women, but to a less noticeable degree. Charles for example, treats Earnestina, his fiancé, more as a child than as a partner. Likewise, Sarah's perpetual claims of equality with him and her persistence in mounting the cliffs before him in the Undercliff, evidently threatens his masculinity. However, Charles has evolved much further than Clegg. His strong desire for Sarah and the world view which she represents illustrates this. Nicholas also has strong chauvinist tendencies in his attitude to women. For him Lily is the romanticised idolised woman and Alison is fallen. However, Nicholas, just like Charles is not unwilling to progress and re-evaluate his concept of Alison.

It is equally perhaps not too rash to claim that Clegg, like the Adam prototype, is neither very intelligent, creative nor artistic. He is quite obviously not a great, progressive artist or thinker which Fowles claims that Eve men -as opposed to Adam men- are. Patricia V. Beatty who has written an article on Fowles first novel *The Collector* and Clegg as "The captive landlord of the Garden of Eden" stresses the lack of aesthetic shaping in his narrative and claims that Clegg is a failed creator of fiction.⁶² However, his lack of aesthetic shaping does not only concern his perhaps trite language, but extends to signify his whole being and his entire world. To emphasise his insufficiencies in this respect he is often contrasted to the highly aesthetic GP whose world is imbued with sexuality which in Fowles's world symbolises and enhances imagination, creativity and freedom from inhibition.

⁶¹Fowles, 1986: 110.

⁶²Beatty, Patricia. W, "John Fowles's Clegg: Captive Landlord of Eden". *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* July 13:3 1982:80

Clegg may perhaps not overtly display a very strong longing for the Christian God or very great similarities with Christianity. In fact, as Neary points out, Clegg reveals himself to be a genuine atheist and rebel against God. One of Fowles's critics, Shymal Bagchee, for example, finds it extraordinary that Clegg and Miranda share a similar concept of God, at least by the end of the book, and uses this as an argument against a thematic reading of *The Collector*.⁶³ It is true that none of Fowles's characters can be regarded as entirely evil or entirely good. However, Clegg's perception of God is neither very surprising nor very important in this respect. Regardless of his outward religious convictions it is evident that he is extremely attached to his dream of a Garden of Eden which in *The Collector* is a grossly deceitful male utopia created by Clegg, where Evisitic sexuality, creativity and progress is subdued by an Adamite moralistic and restraining religiosity. If Clegg believes in God or not is irrelevant, because, to Fowles, the Christian God exists, not as a personal force, but only in the tyranny of men and male values and in a religious pattern which demands unnatural self-control and false moral restrictions. Seen from this perspective Clegg himself becomes not only Adam, but also in his actions -if not in his person- an embodiment of Christianity's absent God. Clegg's atheism even enhances the emptiness which Fowles wants to ascribe to religiosity, because it provides the reader with a feeling of total helplessness and godlessness. However, the Christian analogy is clear also in other respects. To make it explicit, Fowles as Roy Mac Hill has noticed, makes Miranda's cellar cell a former church vault.⁶⁴ Fowles also lets Miranda compare Clegg to a young priest and occasionally describes him as a sheep, lamb, lily-white etc.⁶⁵ Roy Mack Hill very accurately argues that Fowles depicts Clegg, much like Conchis, as "a corrupt Prospero, whose absolute rule over Miranda places him in the category of a Godlike despot."⁶⁶ Another significant method which Fowles continuously employs in the novel is to confuse the

⁶³Baghee, Shymal. "The Collector: The Paradoxical Imagination Of John Fowles" , *Journal of Modern Literature* 8:2, 1980-1981 :223

⁶⁴Hill, Roy- Mack. "Power and Hazard: John Fowles's Theory of Play" *Journal of Modern Literature* 8:2,1980- 1981:214

⁶⁵Fowles, 1986: 214

⁶⁶Hill, 1980-1981: 214

concept between Clegg and God. One example of this is the scene where Clegg's violent male side truly runs amok which leads to his literal rape of her with his camera where Miranda very ambiguously exclaims: "Oh God, You are not a man, if only you were a man"⁶⁷. Miranda eventually also humbly kneels before Clegg, and prays for her life. It seems clear that Clegg and his world, despite his outward atheism, is an embodiment of the religion which also signifies the Adam prototype portrayed in *The Aristos*.

Charles in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Nicholas in *The Magus*, Dan in *Daniel Martin* and Bartholomew in *A Maggot*, have all evolved considerably more than Clegg. Clegg is the only hero; or Adam, who embodies the godlike despot in his very own person. All the other novels except *Mantissa*, which is an exception in many respects and a novel which, according to Fowles, was not intended to be published, have separate god figures such as Mrs Poultney and Mr Freeman in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Conchis in *The Magus*, Anthony and Dan's father in *Daniel Martin*, and Ayscough and Yr Grace in *A Maggot*. Likewise, Clegg is the only hero who does not in any way recognise the strong impact that Christianity and its values has on his actions; his rigid sexual morality for example. Both Charles and Nicholas, as opposed to Clegg, reach the primal level of spiritual maturity: an understanding of the non-existence of God. Nicholas, however, to a greater extent than Charles and especially more than Clegg, begins to develop at least some kind of understanding of the insufficiency of his own Adamistic nature through his experiences in the godgame. Dan and Bartholomew reach even further.

A closer examination of *Daniel Martin* and *A Maggot* and the characterisation of the developed Fowlesian hero in Dan in *Daniel Martin* and Bartholomew in *A Maggot* reveals some similarities with the prototypal Adam, also dissimilarities. These dissimilarities are enhanced by contrast with other men who become the hero's mirror in Adamism. In this case Dan and Bartholomew are contrasted especially with Anthony, Dan's father in *Daniel Martin* and Ayscough in *A Maggot*.

⁶⁷Fowles, 1986: 110

Dan, the hero in *Daniel Martin*, like the prototype in *The Aristos*, still, to some extent embodies stasis and if not hatred of change, at least nostalgia for the past which reveals itself in his romanticised obsession with his lost relationship with Jane and in his decided Englishness. The novel consequently displays a twofold love-hatred towards the English who are partly described as “brainwashed patriots”, “hypocritical”, “prudent”, “inhibited” and “self-obsessed”.⁶⁸ Dan’s young lover, Jenny, reflects this static side of his personality. Her first contribution to Dan’s novel describes Dan as English, passé and stultified with static clichés and a duke look, a pathetic Hemingway character.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, when mirrored against his father and Anthony, Dan must be perceived as closer to antiadamism than Adamism. Most of his reminiscences concerning his father disclose a strong aggression towards his father’s enormous dryness and dullness. His father is a humourless dull preacher and psychologically old, more like a grandfather than a father.⁷⁰ Another example of the extreme deadness of his father is illustrated in his habit of forcing his son to attend funerals for the sake of appearances.⁷¹ Dan of course resents his father for this, just as he resents all the deadness imbued in his father’s philosophy and way of life. Likewise, his friend and brother in law Anthony, and his “antiquated world” is frequently described as old fashioned by Dan.⁷²

If Dan seems to have an overt double nature in this respect, this even more characterises Bartholomew in *A Maggot*. Bartholomew’s and Rebecca’s conversation in his hotel room referred to above allows us to presume that his double nature is more an act than a split personality. As Neary also points out, Bartholomew seems to play a godgame with Rebecca through his Adamistic appearance. Neary argues: ‘There is, in addition, a theatricality about his present enterprise that links the lord directly with Conchis: this adventure, he

⁶⁸Fowles, 1977: Brainwashed patriots:167, Inhibited in emotions:131, Hypocritical:167, Prudent, censuring:167
Obsession with self:167

⁶⁹Fowles, 1977: 32

⁷⁰Fowles, 1977: Humourless: 78, 80, Dull preacher: 78, Old: 77

⁷¹Fowles, 1977: 306

⁷²Fowles, 1977: 71, 48

tells Lacy, "is truly like a tale, why, one of your playpieces", and he himself, he implies, is writer and director.⁷³ Bartholomew, the actor, is often referred to as a stone.⁷⁴ However, he is actually in no sense, except that of acting, static or stultified, on the contrary the whole concept of his person and assignment which literally and metaphorically is a journey away from his father and his perception of life embodies change and progress. Equally, he can in no sense be considered old fashioned. Instead he has risen above his own time in his attitude to women, nature and religion. He even explicitly expresses his dislike of "fixed tomorrows" and the Bible, which he describes as a fixed narrative which makes the individual passive.⁷⁵ Ayscough -the opposing pole of Bartholomew who hates progress and equates change with evil and anarchy- enhances the open-mindedness and freshness of thought in Bartholomew.⁷⁶

Likewise the scientific, unintuitive characteristic which according to *The Aristos* signifies Adam, is also found in the developed Fowlesian hero Dan, but on a totally different level than Clegg, Charles, Nicholas and Dan's opposing pole Anthony. Anthony and Dan's common hobby of collecting orchids is a remnant of the collecting personality in the Fowlesian hero. However, there is an important difference between the Christian philosopher Anthony and our hero Dan's perception of nature. Anthony collects orchids in a scientific male manner, but for Dan collecting is more an emotional experience of beauty and mystery. Dan describes it as follows:

But we first surmounted the barriers between us across orchids. Barriers there were; we were very different young men... He wasn't a nature lover at all, I didn't realise it at the time. He just happened to be a crack field botanist- which goes also, I suspect, for his subsequent professional work as a philosopher... His heaven was a wet meadow full of dull old Dactylorchids; counting and measuring and noting down the degree of hybridisation. I wanted to find the flowers, he wanted to establish some new subspecies. I lived (and hid) poetic moments, he lived Druce and Godfery. My solitary boyhood had forced me to take refuge in nature as a poem, a myth, a catalysis, the only theatre I was allowed to know; it was nine parts emotion and sublimation, but it acquired an aura, a mystery in the anthropological sense.⁷⁷

⁷³Neary, 1992: 186

⁷⁴Fowles, 1996: 169, 353, 307

⁷⁵Fowles, 1977: 45, 389

⁷⁶Fowles, 1977: 234

⁷⁷Fowles, 1977: 70-71

Dan's profession as a film producer also illustrates his overtly mechanic, as opposed to intuitive, personality. However, his insight into the mechanically unimaginative aspect of this medium compared to writing, displays alienation rather than belonging to his profession. Dan describes his medium as follows:

Under the tyranny of the eye, that glutton for frontiers, this is the prime alienation of the cinema...the final cut allows no choice, no more than the one angle; no creative response, no walking around, no time for one's own thought... Images are inherently fascistic because they overstamp the truth, however dim and blurred, of the real experience... The word is the most imprecise of signs, only a science-obsessed age could fail to comprehend that this is its great virtue, not its defect.⁷⁸

Photography is often used symbolically in Fowles's fiction. Foster, who has noticed this claims that photography in these respects becomes a means of killing, reducing a living person to an object.⁷⁹ However, a closer conceptualisation of the frequently used metaphor seems to be Adamistic deadness of imagination and creativity. Clegg in *The Collector*, Dan, a young husband in Egypt, and Fenwick's son in law in *Daniel Martin*, are all examples of men devoted to this deadening art.⁸⁰

Bartholomew also, duly illustrates this mechanical aspect of the traditional, masculine sex. Lacy for example describes him as no ordinary lover and too scientific.⁸¹ Nevertheless, his overtly mathematical and calculating personality seems rather to be concerned with something highly unscientific, namely the creation of mystery. Ayscough; Bartholomew's opposing pole in Adamism, nonetheless, clearly embodies an analytical, unintuitive personality. Foster even argues that Ayscough is described as having a tiny physique and a tiny spirit to enhance the reader's perception of him as pure mind.⁸² Dan, and Bartholomew, have both disassociated themselves from the extreme Adam's obsession with rules and obedience towards established institutions; characteristics which according to *The Aristos* are typical of father figures. This is illustrated through their mutual rejection of their fathers and their way of life. Dan loathes his father and Anthony -who is presented as a father substitute to Dan- for their rigid, controlling, tyrannical and fascistic, paternal

⁷⁸Fowles, 1977: 90

⁷⁹Foster, 1994: 34

⁸⁰Fowles, 1977: 537, 330

⁸¹Fowles, 1977: 146

⁸²Foster, 1994: 165

manners.⁸³ Dan's reminiscences of his father convey his thorough contempt for his father's constipated values:

There was nothing in his personal nature that overtly tyrannised the household... he never once used physical punishment on me. He disapproved of it, even in the village school, though he finally sent me to where the juniors were caned once a fortnight with monotonous regularity. The real tyranny came from the totally accepted belief in the system, the existing social frame. Just as a soldier cannot question orders, the hierarchy of command and all the assumptions that underlie it, nor could we... father must have approved of Hitler for keeping progress so firmly at bay.

On another occasion Dan, in a brief but sufficiently telling exclamation, conveys to his daughter why he has so strongly dissociated himself with his past: "I had a Victorian childhood, Caro. I had to get rid of it."⁸⁴ Dan clearly does not want to walk in his father's footsteps, and although Jenny, in her first contribution to Dan's novel describes a mock paternal, watching and shepherding side of Dan in his relationship to her, the total impression of him reveals him to be far from authoritarian.⁸⁵ His inability to fill his role as a sufficient father to his daughter clearly also signifies his profound dislike of the Adamistic paternal role. He conveys these deeply rooted sentiments when he resists interfering in his daughter's love life and says: "I loathe having to play the Victorian papa ... I'm prepared to be hurt as long as she's happy. I've no right to any other attitude. I've tried to tell her that."⁸⁶

Bartholomew has, also in this respect, evolved one step further than Dan. His rejection of the father is total and literal. He displays a deep hatred and resentment of his father's principles. Ayscough pinpoints this when he complains over Yr Garce's preposterous heir, Bartholomew: "The master disdainful of all expected of his noble rank, disobedient of his gracious father, disrespectful of God, rebellious to family duty..."⁸⁷ Bartholomew displays both cruelty and tyranny when he conducts his godgame. One example of this is the aforementioned upbraiding of Rebecca in his hotel-room. However, friends and reliable witnesses describe his

⁸³Fowles, 1977: 71

⁸⁴Fowles, 1977: 282

⁸⁵Fowles, 1977: 33, 35 and 17, 36

⁸⁶Fowles, 1977: 274

⁸⁷Fowles, 1977: 422

true person as: “an amiable friend”, “no rake” and “virtuous in intent”.⁸⁸ Ayscough, Bartholomew's opposite pole in Adamism, on the other hand, is portrayed as a highly unsympathetic person who metaphorically and literally represents the father and social authority in one coin, who defends hypocrisy and established religion, who condemns people to hell, who believes in the father's moral right to prescribe his son's love life, and who abhors the idea of democracy.⁸⁹

According to Fowles's theory *The Aristos*, the extreme Adam is an antifeminist. A closer look at *Daniel Martin's* Dan displays a male hero who is not totally flawless in this respect. His attitude towards Jenny and his previous women displays chauvinistic tendencies, as does his narcissism which seems foremost to concern difficulties of feeling empathy for others. However, as opposed to the early Fowlesian hero, Dan has at least gained an awareness of his own insufficiency in this respect. The omniscient author explains: “He called himself a male chauvinist, but the self-accusation came from liberal convention, not personal conviction.”⁹⁰ Dan's chauvinism is however, not portrayed as an altogether bad characteristic, since according to himself, it is intrinsically intertwined with artistic creativity. Jenny accuses Dan of being a male chauvinist pig when he leaves her for Jane, but Dan sees the creativity involved in progressing and answers: “All writers are, even female ones”.⁹¹ Dan's chauvinism and narcissism, moreover, seems rather insignificant in contrast to other men in the novel, such as Anthony. Anthony, just like his son, Paul, is described as a terrifying egomaniac. His antifeminism especially reveals itself in his strong suppression of Jane's selfhood and religious conviction.⁹² Jane, Nell, Rose and Anthony play out a hideous scenario of Jane and Anthony's marriage in which Anthony with his intellectual arrogance, his dullness, and his church has killed and

⁸⁸Fowles, 1996: 258, 195, 132, 133

⁸⁹Fowles, 1996: 150, 164, 134, 375

⁹⁰Fowles, 1977: 612

⁹¹Fowles, 1977: 662

⁹²Fowles, 1977: 177

slaughtered Jane's former true, intuitive, living self.⁹³ Moreover, *Daniel Martin* portrays various other men who in comparison to Dan are absurd Adamites. One of these characters is Dan's unsympathetic colleague Prick with the significant Jesus look, who believes in raping women for their dresses.⁹⁴ Another character is the Christian, violent Ben, who subdues, tyrannises and physically abuses his wife.

Ayscough, Bartholomew's opposing pole in Adamism, is naturally the person who most prominently displays narcissism and antifeminism in *A Maggot*. Also in this respect, Bartholomew acts his part as an Adamite God, theatrically tyrannical towards Rebecca. However, in all other respects in Rebecca's testimony, and especially when mirrored against Ayscough, Bartholomew seems to be an uncommonly liberated man in his dealings with women. The Bartholomew presented by Rebecca gladly kneels for a woman, an idea which to the mind of Ayscough is unfathomable. Ayscough, on the contrary, even makes Clegg's antifeminism look rather bleak. Only one of many examples of this is his belief in the Catechism on the contemporary female mind; a pamphlet which is presented in the novel and which describes women as lacy, unreliable and ungodly.⁹⁵

It is clear that even though Dan in many respects is imperfect, both Dan and Bartholomew have developed considerably since the first Adam Clegg. Dan and Bartholomew are constantly contrasted through Adamistic representatives of Christianity, such as Anthony, Dan's father, Anthony's son Paul, the Prick, Ben in *Daniel Martin* and Ayscough in *A Maggot*. This especially is true of Ayscough: a lawyer who represents the strict Christian authority of his era, together with Anthony a Christian philosopher and Dan's father a boring reverend, exemplify the thinkers who, according to *The Aristos* are removed from the category of great, progressive artists and thinkers. Dan however, who often displays profound insight and wisdom, has great potentiality to become one of these men. Bartholomew nonetheless, is truly presented as a great, wise

⁹³Fowles, 1977: 190

⁹⁴Fowles, 1977: 465

⁹⁵Fowles, 1996: 320

thinker. He presents and represents many of Fowles's philosophical ideas and beliefs. John Neary has noticed this and argues: “the lord's language is familiar, in some ways an echo of *The Aristos*”⁹⁶

It is clear that the developed Fowlesian hero's relationship to the Christian God is enormously changed since the early Fowlesian hero. Nicholas and Charles understand the non-existence of God, but Dan, to some extent and especially Bartholomew, the last Fowlesian Adam, reach a thorough conviction of the deadness of God. Their dissatisfaction with the Christian God evolves into a stark resentment of established religion, which inevitably assumes the shape of blasphemy and scorn, something which the early Fowlesian Adam was too unrelieved to assume. Dan has begun to develop an ability to scorn the Christian God, although he is still haunted by feelings of guilt and remorse, as an extract from his adolescent reveals:

Small boys' arguments for atheism may not have much logic or cogency; but they came much faster and (though I knew how to cover up, even then) more attractively to me than to the others. So too did the pleasures of sexuality; I fell into that, from the profoundly sexless and emotion-banning ambience of the Vicarage, like Adam himself. I had agonising feelings of shame and guilt, of course, and masturbation and blasphemy became inextricably interwoven.⁹⁷

However, the adult Dan is able to extricate himself from his father's guilt ridden impact on him, and accordingly reaches sufficient certainty in his atheistic faith to be able to, as he describes it, “receive the Holy Communion from his father's hands without an iota of belief”. Their rejection of both the male God and the Adam in themselves is illustrated by their dissociation from their respective fathers and Christianity. Equally Bartholomew in *The Maggot* is further evolved than Dan in *Daniel Martin*. Bartholomew has literally and metaphorically abandoned his father's house.⁹⁸ Most importantly, the ultimate Fowlesian hero has become his own god; his own director and author, a Conchis, more snakelike than godlike in any Fowlesian Christian sense.

⁹⁶Neary, 1992: 188

⁹⁷Fowles, 1977: 86

⁹⁸Fowles, 1996: 130

Eve Women in Fowles's Fiction

Fowles characterisation of woman as redemptive and instructual for the hero on his existential quest is a familiar theme among the Fowlesian critics. Thomas C. Foster and James W. Sollisch discuss this aspect of Fowles's treatment of woman. Foster writes: "The constant features, naturally, are the enigmatic woman and the existential mystery, for these are male quests and male mythologies. It is through the mysterious Other that the Self begins to acquire understanding in Fowles's thought". Sollisch likewise argues: "One should note that it is always men who fall in Fowles's fiction and almost always women who tempt and educate men."⁹⁹ Foster describes the Fowlesian male hero as a man at loss with society, encountering a woman to share or mirror his difficulties.¹⁰⁰ John Haegart, like Sollisch, naturally links this narrative technique to Fowles's theory of Adam and Eve in *The Aristos* and argues that Fowles's fiction frequently presents questing heroes and assisting women with the catalytic role of luring the male protagonist towards whole sight, or wholeness.¹⁰¹ He argues:

For in the authorial "godgame" of his fiction, up to and including *Daniel Martin*, women are endowed with a unique impressionability: a capacity for change and movement that enables them to burst through the "net" of custom and embrace reality in all its infinite variety. As an agent of growth and renewal, the Fowles heroine thus has always been a creative challenge for the male protagonist. More than that, she has been mainly responsible for whatever portion of moral awareness he has successfully secured in the course of his struggles. To her has fallen the often thankless task of "unblinding" the hero to his latent prejudices and inherent weaknesses, and of leading him into a fuller acceptance of the real and of freedom.

Ellen Mc Daniel who discusses Fowles tarot symbolism in *The Magus* has noticed a consistency in Fowles treatment of the heroine as an instrument for teaching the male:

⁹⁹Sollisch, 1983: 4, Foster, 1994: 48

¹⁰⁰Foster, 1994: 6

¹⁰¹Haegert, 1986: 165, 161

The word 'whole sight' which Haegert uses is taken from the one of the novel *Daniel Martin's* very first lines: 'Whole sight; or all the rest is desolation.' *Daniel Martin*: 1

Miranda in *The Collector* dies trying to melt the cold unfeelingness of Clegg. Sarah Woodruff in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* jars Charles Smithson out of the fossilizing convention of Victorian life and, Magus-like, points him toward selfhood. In Fowles long story, "The Enigma," a typical Fowles woman- cool, beautiful, intelligent, and English- teaches a mystery-chasing constable that more profound mysteries exist which don't have to be chased at all... The female Magus, the Mouse, fails to convince the decent young art critic, David Williams, that in rejecting her he is rejecting all mystery, change, and growth... All through the fiction of John Fowles, Magi, be they men or women, work to lead their initiates to the female "reality" of self-consciousness.¹⁰²

John Heagert divines that Miranda is an early version of women like Jane and Sarah, "heroines who would later actualize the authenticity that is only latent in her youthful portrait"¹⁰³ The mysteriously persuasive and redemptive power which her successors employ is however, weak and insufficient in this young Eve hence she fails to redeem Clegg as well as herself. Even Jane in *Daniel Martin* functions as an instrument for insight in Dan's life. She is "a door in the wall, which reopens new possibilities".¹⁰⁴ The narrator explains Dan's perhaps partly subconscious attraction to her: "She was also some kind of emblem of a redemption from a life devoted to heterogamy and adultery, the modern errant ploughman's final reward; and Dan saw, or felt, abruptly, for the first time in his life, the true difference between Eros and Agape".¹⁰⁵ Haegert rightly argues that despite her outward weak performance her presence still has the same effect on the hero as a catalytic force, as the earlier heroines such as for example Sarah and Isobel do.¹⁰⁶ However, what Haegert does not discuss is the combined strong impact that various Evistic women have on the progress of Dan's quest.

Typical for the Fowlesian woman is also her usage of sexuality to enact the fall in the process of the hero's development. This very traditional, and not at all Biblical, view of Eve's role in the garden of Eden is significant in all of Fowles's heroines. Sarah Woodruff in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* eventually goads Charles towards his ultimate insight by means of the irresistible sexuality which she engenders. Her strongest hold on Charles is her mysterious and yet frank sexuality. Each encounter with her in the Undercliff garden heightens his sexual attraction towards her and generates his growing dissociation from God. As John Neary

¹⁰²Mc Daniel, Ellen. "The Magus: Fowles Tarot Quest" *Journal of Modern Literature* 8:2, 1980-1981: 253

¹⁰³Heagert, 1986: 172

¹⁰⁴Fowles, 1977: 44

¹⁰⁵Fowles, 1977: 614

¹⁰⁶Haegert, 1986: 163

also acknowledges the metaphorical importance of the sexual fall is clearly implied as Charles after the short love act which Sarah initiates truly "falls" from the rigid conventions of the Victorian Age and experiences the existential revelation in the Exeter church.¹⁰⁷ Fowles writes: "Charles did not know it, but in those brief poised seconds above the waiting sea, in the luminous evening silence broken only by the waves' quiet wash, the whole Victorian Age was lost. And I do not mean he had taken the wrong path."¹⁰⁸ Julie and June in *A Magus* conducts Nicholas through the "God-disintoxicating" godgame, mainly by sexual teasing. Haegert has noticed this and very fittingly describes them as erotic agents in Conchis's existential godgame.¹⁰⁹ Also Miranda in *The Collector*, although unsuccessfully, uses sexuality in an attempt to goad Clegg out of his Adamism. Notice how Fowles inevitably suggests that sexuality and the body implicitly can be used as a female weapon. Miranda writes:

All this Vestal talk about 'saving yourself up' for the right man. I've always despised it. Yet I've always held back. I'm mean with my body. I've got to get this meanness out of the way... I must fight with my weapons. Not his. Not selfishness and brutality and shame and resentment. Therefore with generosity (I give myself) and gentleness (I kiss the beast) and no shame (I do what I do with my own free will) and forgiveness (he can't help himself). Even a baby. His baby. Anything for freedom.¹¹⁰

Likewise, Nancy, Jane and Jenny in *Daniel Martin* all lead Dan away from his father's religion through sexuality. Nancy invites Dan to the very first Edenic garden of the novel which dissociates Dan from his father and the church. Jane, although she fails to liberate herself, cuts Dan off from Anthony and his religion's influence on his life through a sexual encounter which she initiates. The young and beautiful Jenny serves as a contrast to the rigid morality of his father's stultifying religion. Dan remembers: "I think of Jenny, her simplicity and grace, the way she slips into sexuality as a seal into water. The fuss of those days, the multiple guilts and ignorances".¹¹¹ Rebecca in *A Maggot* assumes the role of Bartholomew's muse and personal prostitute in his mysterious quest. Her own account of the event suggests that her assignment had been, by

¹⁰⁷Neary, 1992: 168

¹⁰⁸Fowles, 1969: 66

¹⁰⁹Heagert, 1986: 162

¹¹⁰Fowles, 1986: 238

¹¹¹Fowles, 1986: 94

some mysterious ritual, to cure the impotence of her master. In this respect, Rebecca, just like her predecessors, clearly identifies with Fowles's image of the sexually redeeming Eve.

Several critics have discussed the implicitly sexual aspect of the Fowlesian female characters, especially in their redemptive or inspiring role towards the man. John Haegert for instance, takes *Daniel Martin* and Dan's perception of Jane as an example of this. He argues that Daniel "slowly focuses on an image of erotic womanhood that is by now thoroughly familiar to Fowles's readers: that of a mysterious and subversive Other capable of eroding men's "reified" beliefs and of restoring their very selves to a more inclusive vision of reality".¹¹² Moreover, Thomas C. Foster argues: "The constant features naturally, are the enigmatic woman and the existential mystery, for these are male quests and male mythologies. It is through the mysterious Other that the Self begins to acquire understanding in Fowles's thought... Since he writes chiefly from a male perspective, the Other has a strong sexual element."¹¹³

Sexuality and inspiration are very much intertwined in Fowles's fictional world. He frequently uses the concept of the muse to illustrate this aspect of woman. *Mantissa's* Erato is the clearest example of this, and women like Jenny in *Daniel Martin* clearly embody this concept of womanhood as she functions as the inspiration for Dan to start to write the novel of his life. The Mouse in *The Ebony Tower* is obviously meant to be a muse, both for Mr Breasley and for David. A closer study of woman's Evistic role as an inspirational source for men's mental progress, shows that the concept of the muse is used by Fowles in the portrayal of most of his enigmatic women: something which he himself asserts in his self-revealing essay on Thomas Hardy: "Hardy and the Hag".¹¹⁴

Another strongly emphasised female characteristic in the general Fowlesian heroine is her Evisticly intuitive, illogic, and imaginative side, qualities which are all in accordance with Fowles' concept of Eve in

¹¹²Haegert, 1986: 160.

¹¹³Foster, 1994: 49.

¹¹⁴Fowles, John. "Hardy and the Hag" *Thomas Hardy after Fifty Years*, 1977: 28-42: 31

The Aristos. Erato and Rebecca, the heroines of Fowles last published novels *A Maggot* and *Mantissa* totally embody this characteristic, as do Erato in her aesthetic role as muse and Rebecca in *The Maggot* with her outstanding imagination, her acting abilities, and her implicit illogic. Like Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* Rebecca uses imagination to trick and dumbfound not only Ayscough, but also Jones and her sex customers. She annoys Ayscough with her stubborn refusal to be logical:

Yr. Grace will observe she shows little and often no reason nor logick in her beliefs, and he may censure me that I pressed not hard to expose such patent muddled foolishness... I know her unlettered kind, they would rather first be burnt at the stake than hear reason or recant; they are obstinate to death, most blindly *opiniatre*, as fixed and resolute in this, tho' it be in unreason and for all their womanishness in outward, as any man in a far better cause.¹¹⁵

In order to further emphasise this aspect of his heroine Fowles has made Rebecca “sinisterly” left handed and explains:

Like Rebecca they are poor at reason, often confused in argument; their sense of time (and politic timing) is often defective. They tend to live and wander in a hugely extended now, treading both past and future as present, instead of keeping them in control and order, firmly separated like honest right handers. They confuse, they upset, they disturb. Rebecca is driven now to the very brink of her left handed self, that is her kind.¹¹⁶

Thomas C. Foster has noticed this and argues that the novel explores the relationship between reason and unreason and describes Rebecca and Ayscough as the antithesis in emotion and reason.¹¹⁷ Fowles affirms this interpretation of Rebecca in an interview with James R. Baker, who suggests that the novel as he puts it: “contrasts two mentalities - the scientific, objectivist, rationalistic vs. the imaginative, the visionary, the religious.”¹¹⁸

In addition Miranda’s emotional, illogical and imaginative personality is contrasted with Clegg’s scientific, mechanic one in *The Collector*. Miranda declares that she hates scientists, collectors and classifiers and wants to live to the full, not sit and watch, like Clegg.¹¹⁹ Like Rebecca, she bewilders her coprotagonist

¹¹⁵Fowles, 1996: 442.

¹¹⁶Fowles, 1996: 430.

¹¹⁷Foster, 1994: 165

¹¹⁸Baker, James R. "An Interview With John Fowles" *Michigan Quarterly Review* 25 (1986) 661-683: 669

¹¹⁹Fowles, 1986: 55, 237

with her chaotically emotional temper. Miranda writes: “He makes me change, he makes me want to dance around him, bewilder him, dazzle him, dumbfound him. He’s so slow, so unimaginative, so lifeless. Like zinc white. I see it’s a sort of tyranny he has over me. He forces me to be changeable, to act.”¹²⁰ John Neary argues that Miranda destroys Clegg’s dream by her unpredictability of flesh and blood otherness.¹²¹

The same pattern describes the women in *Daniel Martin*. Jane is similar to Fowles’s other Female heroines, that is utterly unpredictable, unattainable and difficult to grasp. Her intuitive nature is one of the most important characteristics as she recurrently advocates intuition and right feeling. Costello quotes this passage from *Daniel Martin* and argues that she is an embodiment of Jungs anima.¹²² :

Beneath all her faults, her wrong dogmas, her self-obsession, her evasions, there lay, as there had always lain - in some analogue of that vaguely entity that Marxists call totality, full consciousness of both essence and phenomenon- a profound, and profoundly unintellectual, sense of natural orientation...that mysterious sense he had always thought of as right feeling. But he had always thought of it as something static and unchanging- and conscious, even if hidden; when of course it had always really been living, mobile, shifting and quivering, even veering wildly, like a magnetic needle... so easily distorted, shaken out of true by mind, emotion, circumstance, environment. It had never meant that she could see deeper. In a way it must be a thing that limited and confused rational vision, that would provoke countless errors of actual choice... It was simply that she *felt* deeper...¹²³

Jenny likewise displays intuitive and slightly illogical characteristics. She predicts Dan’s reunion with Jane for example.¹²⁴ Her intuition is contrasted to Dan’s scientific nature on their journey to Tsankawi. Jenny finds Dan much too obsessed with scientific names and words. Her only wish is instead to follow her intuition and make love.¹²⁵ Likewise her three contributions to his novel resemble the profoundly charismatic and imaginative muse Erato in *Mantissa*. John Haegert argues: “Although rightly regarded as his most realistic work to date, *Daniel Martin* often conveys the impression that woman is a wholly charismatic presence, a locus of power and magic”¹²⁶ However this description actually fits the vast majority of Fowlesian women. In

¹²⁰Fowles, 1986: 127

¹²¹Neary, 1992: 32

¹²²Costello, 1990: 41

¹²³Fowles, 1977: 651-652

¹²⁴Fowles, 1977: 16

¹²⁵Fowles, 1977: 350

¹²⁶Haegert, 1986: 162

an interview with Dianne Vipond, Fowles verifies this interpretation of his heroines: “The women in my books are usually standing for other things. I’ve used the phrase in *Daniel Martin*, right feeling, which I derived from Jane Austen, that central moral position that hovers behind all her scenes. Women enshrine right feeling better; a comprehensiveness of reaction to the world.”

The Fowlesian heroine can furthermore be seen as an emblem of antagonism. The Godlike man is identified by his authority, rules and order, whereas she becomes synonymous with chaos and rebellion. As John Neary suggests Miranda’s refusal to follow Clegg’s rules derives from her persistence in being alive despite Clegg’s evil attempts to spiritually kill her.¹²⁷ Miranda remains bold, unpredictable, quick, fluttery, unafraid, and above all engaged in a constant fight for an unreachable freedom.¹²⁸ Neary argues that *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*’s heroine Sarah has her own order, which is not the order of the Victorian Age, but more accurately its opposite, namely freedom.¹²⁹ Thomas C. Foster, compares the stubborn and authority defying women Sarah and Rebecca in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and *A Maggot*. He argues that: “Like Sarah, Rebecca proves to be a difficult witness, supplying information at her will rather than that of the questioner, contradicting a social superior, manifesting a silent stubbornness that infuriates the male aggressor.”¹³⁰ John Neary draws the same conclusion that Rebecca represents chaos in contrast to Ayscoughs ordered world.¹³¹ Erato in *Mantissa* is a thoroughly chaotic and wild creation, both in temper and in her unwillingness to resign to rules of both literature and social conventions. Isobel, in “The Enigma” aspires to give an impression of antiauthority as she -as Thomas C. Foster notices- wisely professes that: “rules makes reality untrue to life”. Likewise Jenny in *Daniel Martin* defies old fashioned, morality and rules.”¹³² Dan finds her unruliness explicitly attractive and compares her to Jane: “They said nothing for a while, leaning on the

¹²⁷Neary, 1992: 27

¹²⁸Fowles, 1986: 31, 106, 78.

¹²⁹Neary, 1992: 178.

¹³⁰Foster, 1994: 161.

¹³¹Neary, 1992: 187.

¹³²Foster, 1994: 105 and Fowles, 1977: 94

parapet, and he thought of Jenny- how perhaps what attracted him in her was also this same incipient contrariness, this refusal to accept his rules; although of course she was greener, less conditioned, far less sure of herself... which was equally attractive in its way.”¹³³ It is possible to perceive that the Fowlesian woman consistently assumes a headstrong antipathy towards her male counterparts. However, it is perhaps similarly clear that Fowles not only aspires to make woman a rebel against her closest male suppressers, but that she inevitably subsumes the role of rebel against the whole system of totalitarian patriarchy.

The Fowlesian woman is a counterpart to the divine not only in manners and convictions, but in her total being. In contrast to the Adamite man who, in his authoritarian divine nature symbolises God, woman is frequently associated with nature and the mundane. Nancy in *Daniel Martin* lives on a farm among animals and dirt and Dan perceives her and her family as mundane and sexual in contrast to his own, their home surrounded by wild nature whereas his is surrounded by a cultured orchard. .¹³⁴

Like Nancy, Jenny has an animal naturalness. Dan contemplates: “I think of Jenny, her simplicity and careless grace, the way she slips out of clothes into nakedness, into sexuality, as easily as a seal into water.”¹³⁵ Jane embodies animalism and is closely associated with the wild bitch in Palmyra during the love scene.¹³⁶ Rebecca is no exception to the rule. She has hare eyes and a dumb animal sadness, and Ayscough is accused of examining her as if she is an animal.¹³⁷ Our first impression of her is on a ”beast”, enveloped in a brown, hooded cloak singing in a significantly human voice, throwing Flowers at a nonplussed unappreciative young girl.¹³⁸ The hooded cloak definitely echoes Robin Hood, a man to which Rebecca earns some important characteristics, both heroes in a revolution against the nobility and social conventions, and both so frequently associated with nature. Rebecca wears green when her naturalness and sexuality are emphasised, a narrative

¹³³Fowles, 1977: 492.

¹³⁴Fowles, 1977: 370.

¹³⁵Fowles, 1977: 94.

¹³⁶Fowles, 1977: 640, 641.

¹³⁷Fowles, 1996: 71, 55.

¹³⁸Fowles, 1996: 7, 5, 10, 12, 14.

device which Fowles applies also to Jane in *Daniel Martin*, Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Miranda in *The Collector*.¹³⁹ Like Sarah, Rebecca loves wild nature, a characteristic quite unusual for her age. As to emphasise her implicit mundaneness she is frequently described as flesh. She sings and smiles and picks flowers. This illustrates her kinship with nature and divides her from the rest of the travellers and the perplexed religious townspeople as especially humane and more akin to nature.

John Neary suggests that Miranda in *The Collector* symbolises humanity as trapped in Clegg's prison.¹⁴⁰ There are a lot of details which support this interpretation of her role towards Clegg. It seems clear that Miranda owns an infinitely more profound understanding of human nature than Clegg. She loathes the way he kills nature by pinning up dead butterflies just like she loathes his Adamite attempts to kill the last living fragments of her and their relationship when he wants to photograph her nakedness.¹⁴¹ The words which she exclaims on this occasion reveal her own innermost mundane soul and its profound contrast to the heartless despot she is placed before: "You are breaking every decent human law, every decent human relationship, every decent thing that's ever happened between your sex and mine ... You're not a human being, you're just a dirty little masturbating worm" and finally "Oh God, you're not a man, if only you were a man"¹⁴² In another context Miranda expresses her need to paint in a human, feminine way: "I don't want to be clever or great or "significant" or given all that clumsy masculine analysis. I want to paint sunlight on children's faces, or flowers in a hedge or a street after April rain."¹⁴³ Miranda is portrayed with animal metaphors, as for example a tiger in a fight for freedom. Sexuality, shrewdness and humanity are the female weapons, which she is prepared to use against Clegg in her fight for freedom, a weapon which the young

¹³⁹Fowles, 1996: 29, Fowles, 1986: 36. Fowles, 1969: 301

¹⁴⁰Neary, 1992: 43

¹⁴¹Fowles, 1986: 55

¹⁴²Fowles, 1986: 107, 109, 110

¹⁴³Fowles, 1986: 131

Fowlesian heroine still has to learn to use, to be less divinely moral like Clegg and instead more human and humane.¹⁴⁴

It is possible to perceive that the Fowlesian woman is a personification, not only of antagonism towards God in her role as representative of humanity, but also as an emblem of dark forces. This is most explicitly conveyed, not only in her outspoken antagonism against conventional religion or God but also by Fowles ubiquitous habit of portraying her, by means of Christian symbolism as mysteriously dark, wicked or sinister. His frequent manner of associating her with animal imagery is only one example of this narrative technique. Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is, for example, called the woman of Babylon by the novels prophet Jeremiah. The early version of the Fowlesian heroine Miranda is also portrayed with dark imagery.¹⁴⁵ In her developing antipathy towards God she starts to, as she herself puts it, feel comfort in the darkness.¹⁴⁶ GP tells her that: "there's that scarlet point in your eye. What is it? Passion? Stop?"¹⁴⁷ Even Jane in *Daniel Martin* is depicted as dark and mysterious. The reader is informed that she has hidden her dark self.¹⁴⁸ She envies her sister Nell for possessing Dan and for being "the scarlet woman of Babylon".¹⁴⁹ However, her countenance, like most Fowlesian Eves is dark. She has Socratic brown eyes and she is, like her predecessor Sarah, referred to as a dark, mysterious, and faintly smiling figure.¹⁵⁰ During her journey with Dan she starts to let her old dark self live again. A black dress makes her look much younger and attractive.¹⁵¹ Fowles subtly suggests that her encounter with an Egyptian temple turns her into a dragon, and the temple of Baal helps her to take the step of leaving her old life.¹⁵² Also Nancy in *Daniel Martin*, like Jenny in the same novel, is, especially during

¹⁴⁴Fowles, 1986: 238, 237-238

¹⁴⁵Fowles, 1969: 65, 77, 78, 83, 84, 105, 136, 172

¹⁴⁶Fowles, 1986: 227, 124

¹⁴⁷Fowles, 1986: 175

¹⁴⁸Fowles, 1977: 319- 320

¹⁴⁹Fowles, 1977: 60

¹⁵⁰Fowles, 1977: 413, 599, 20, 25, 416, 419, 430.

¹⁵¹Fowles, 1977: 501.

¹⁵²Fowles, 1977: 581, 651.

the love scenes, portrayed as dark, wicked, smiling and kneeling blasphemously.¹⁵³ Rebecca in *A Maggot* is likewise described as dark. The narrator tells us, with a tinge of sarcasm, that her left-handedness is sinister.¹⁵⁴ Her shadow is spiderlike.¹⁵⁵ She adorns herself with poison etc.¹⁵⁶ In a climatic change in Ayscough's interrogation the narrator explains that she falls and has a fit in which she denounces -as the narrator puts it- Ayscough's creed.¹⁵⁷ Afterwards the narrator goes on to describe the scene: "Tudor moves closer, then stopping a yard short of the tranced girl, gingerly reaches out a hand and shakes her arm, as if she were a snake or some dangerous animal. Still Rebecca stares towards the door. "Harder, man, harder. She won't bite thee."¹⁵⁸ The dark imagery which signifies the Fowlesian heroine has been noted by critics of Fowles'. John Heagert for example describes Fowles's heroines as follows:

Mysterious, subversive, often melodramatic figures, the dark ladies of his fiction have been typically instrumental in expanding the hero's consciousness and alerting him to the reality's unexpected "monstrousness" and "vigour"... (And much further down) Whereas earlier, in a work like *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the heroine had seemed a truly mystifying force behind his fiction, capable of shocking and bewildering readers with her larger-than-text existence, of late she has become an accustomed and expected figure, a familiar inhabitant in Fowles's fictional realm. ¹⁵⁹

Likewise Ina Ferris's essay "Realist Intentions and Mythic Impuls in *Daniel Martin*" identifies Jane as a typically dark Fowlesian heroine:

Behind all of Fowles's heroines stands the eternally lost mother, the source of the "unified magical world of infancy" outlined in his Hardy essay. Dark-eyed, cryptic, smiling faintly, Jane possesses the sibylline, gnomic quality that marks the Fowles's heroine... Woman is the elusive Eurodice who abandons the hero and draws him into the underworld as do Alison in *The Magus* and Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.¹⁶⁰

The Fowlesian heroine's earthliness is also stressed by her disinterest in and loathing of Christian faith. Miranda in *The Collector* is the first and last heroine who genuinely expresses a wish to believe in God and

¹⁵³Fowles, 1977: 396, 387, 348

¹⁵⁴Fowles, 1996: 31.

¹⁵⁵Fowles, 1996: 31.

¹⁵⁶Fowles, 1996: 31.

¹⁵⁷Fowles, 1996: 431

¹⁵⁸Fowles, 1996: 432.

¹⁵⁹Haegert, 1986: 168, 169.

¹⁶⁰Ferris, Ina "Realist Intention and Mythic Impulse in *Daniel Martin*" *Journal of Narrative Technique* 12:2 Spring 1982: 146- 153: 150.

who perhaps shares a bit of this male dream of a Christian Garden of Eden, but the profound disappointment in God's inability to interfere in her situation convinces her of the inevitable absence of a good God:

These few days I've felt Godless. I've felt cleaner, less muddled, less blind. I still believe in God. But he's so remote, so cold, so mathematical. I see that we have to live as if there is no God. Prayer and worship and singing hymns- all silly and useless... It's no use trusting vaguely in your luck, in Providence or God's being kind to you. You have to act and fight for yourself. The sky is absolutely empty. Beautifully pure and empty.¹⁶¹

The heroines in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and in *Daniel Martin* are more developed. Thomas C. Foster argues that Sarah is "unorthodox in her views and manners; in an age in which orthodoxy is praised above all else, her inability or refusal to conform makes her a refreshing literary creation."¹⁶² Sarah's beliefs are also truly unorthodox. She refuses to conform to the useless morality of the Christian society so much that she deliberately chooses to adopt the role of a socially and religiously fallen woman. In living with Anthony, Jane violates her own conviction of religious disbelief. However, after Anthony's death she is able to acknowledge her true self. She is the godless mother.¹⁶³ Jenny, moreover shows little interest in the Christian religion, she can only laugh when Dan ridicules Christians and their absurd Christian hymns.¹⁶⁴

The last Fowlesian heroine Rebecca, however, seems at least outwardly to differ from her predecessors in that she represents a Christian sect. She speaks much of Jesus and love and peace. However, a closer study of her creed reveals that the essence of her faith is clearly atheistic, and implicitly resembles her creator's as presented in *The Aristos*. Just like John Fowles she does not believe in God's mercy but defines it as "money loaned".¹⁶⁵ She believes that no one shall be judged, i.e. God will not judge the world.¹⁶⁶ She furthermore states that God is the cause of Yr. Grace's sorrow.¹⁶⁷ It is also noticeable how she, in one of her theological explanations, reveals her belief that God is dead: "Holy Mother Wisdom, 'tis she the bearing spirit of god's

¹⁶¹Fowles, 1986: 223

¹⁶²Fowles, 1986: 71

¹⁶³Fowles, 1986: 161

¹⁶⁴Fowles, 1977: 34

¹⁶⁵Fowles, 1996: 437, 1993: 107

¹⁶⁶Fowles, 1996: 431

¹⁶⁷Fowles, 1996: 304

will, and one with Him from the beginning, that takes up all that Christ the saviour promised. That is both his mother and his widow, and his daughter beside.”¹⁶⁸ The reader, however, is tricked into not noticing this as Ayscough vehemently dispatches her words as blasphemous in that they propose an equality between the sexes.¹⁶⁹ Unlike her fellow Quaker friends, she appoints Bartholomew as Messiah, which inevitably suggests that she embraces his religious convictions. The novel frequently deals with Bartholomew’s religious convictions, which to a great extent resemble the beliefs of John Fowles. Bartholomew expresses his disbelief in the present notions of God, and he sympathises with the ancient Greeks who knew that God is unknowable.¹⁷⁰ This is an idea which Fowles discusses in *The Aristos* on several occasions.¹⁷¹ Both Rebecca and Bartholomew apprehend God as change, or motion, a description which is quite the opposite of Fowles’s portrayal of the Christian God in his account on Eden.¹⁷² The silver lady who Rebecca describes, like Fowles’s “gods” decline worship and honour.¹⁷³ Notice also that Bartholomew urges Rebecca to scorn heaven, male gods, in the same manner as she has scorned man in her role as prostitute, and that she throughout the novel does so in her reluctance towards Ayscough and the male religion and the male values that he represents.¹⁷⁴ Her religion is thoroughly female and her outward acceptance of her husband’s religion is not genuine as the differences in theology between her own religion and her husband’s clearly shows.

¹⁶⁸Fowles, 1996 379

¹⁶⁹Fowles, 1996: 380

¹⁷⁰Fowles, 1996: 150

¹⁷¹Fowles, 1993: 20, 70, 100, 101, 81

¹⁷²Fowles, 1996: 149, 1993: 166.

¹⁷³Fowles, 1993: 356, 1993: 112, 26.

¹⁷⁴Fowles, 1996: 56

Eve-men and Adam-women in Fowles's Fiction

"There are of course Adam-women and Eve-men; singularly few, among the world's great progressive artists and thinkers, have not belonged to the latter category."¹⁷⁵ Fowles's words concerning Eve-men and Adam-women are few but significant for a deeper understanding of the concept behind these literal inventions. A closer study of Fowles's novels allows us to perceive how the concept of these categories of men and women to an enormous extent can be defined by the character's philosophical standpoint, and for the typical Eve-men by their role as mentors or "thinkers".

In the Fowlesian Eden a typical Eve-man character seems to be indispensable, i.e. the wise male guru or mentor who encourages the hero to progress in the right direction. As will be illustrated he is recognised as an Eve-man in three important aspects. He is prominent in his role as guru or mentor; he does possess modified, yet distinctive Eve characteristics and his religious conviction is not always atheistic yet inevitably not Christian.

Each novel seems to have one especially prominent "thinker" and mentor. The first one is G.P. in *The Collector*. The reader is presented to George Paston only through Miranda's diary, yet he remains one of the three main characters in the novel. Laughlin, Neary and Bagchee all discuss G.P.'s role as mentor. Bagchee argues that G.P. resembles *The Magus's* Conchis and that he is the first of many teacher-inspirer-enchanter figures.¹⁷⁶ It is interesting to notice how Bagchee and Neary both stress the fact that G.P.'s philosophy resembles Fowles's own.¹⁷⁷ John Neary writes: "And her dogmatic little list of things that her mentor (or

¹⁷⁵Fowles, 1993: 166

¹⁷⁶Bagchee, 1980-1981: 130

¹⁷⁷Bagchee: 1980-1981: 234, Neary, 1992: 21-22

Magus), G.P. has taught her is Fowlesian philosophy reduced to the level of a Boy Scout handbook.”¹⁷⁸ Another prominent male philosopher presented to us in Fowles’s fiction is Bartholomew in *The Maggot*. It is significant that in this late novel the hero himself has developed into a great thinker and mentor. John Neary acknowledges what has already been discussed, that also this man’s philosophy in some ways does echo Fowles’s and the Aristos.¹⁷⁹ *Daniel Martin*’s most prominent thinker and mentor does perhaps reveal himself to be a shade more subtle. Nevertheless he exists, as Foster likewise points out in the shape of a German professor on board Dan and Jane’s cruiser.¹⁸⁰ Foster moreover notices that Fowles’s fiction frequently presents similar mentor characters such as Maurice Conchis in *A Magus*, Dr Grogan in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and Henry Breasley in *The Ebony Tower*. Dr Grogan is a very important mentor for Charles in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*. Every encounter with him eventually helps or inspires Charles to take one more step towards Sarah and away from Earnestina and the Victorian Age. Peter Brandt has also recognised his maguslike qualities and compares his speech to that of Conchis.¹⁸¹

The mentor figures help and inspire the hero -and in *The Collector* the heroine- to evolve and discover philosophical truths. Their encouragement and inspirational support is crucial for the protagonist’s spiritual development. These mentors assume godlike roles in their relationship with the protagonist, or perhaps serpentlike is a better word, as their greatest design is to help the protagonist towards a greater understanding of the non-existence of god, at least the western conventional concept of God. Although the Eve man resembles the original Eve much in this respect, the difference is significant. Whereas the Eve-woman essentially relies on her incredible sense of intuition in her instructive role, the Eve man generally has a solid education or pathos which accordingly elevates him to the level of progressive artist and great thinker, a role which, in accordance with *The Aristos*, inevitably remains unsurpassed by any Eve woman. G.P. in *The*

¹⁷⁸Neary, 1992: 21-22

¹⁷⁹Neary, 1992: 188

¹⁸⁰Foster, 1994: 136

¹⁸¹Brandt, Peter "In Search of the Eighth man: A study of John Fowles" *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* Nov. 1983: 50

Collector is a great acknowledged artist, whom Miranda respects highly. The professor in *Daniel Martin* is an acknowledged Egyptologist:

He was not primarily an excavation archaeologist - his field was the economy of Ancient Egypt. He had had a heart attack five years before and had given up his active professorship at Leipzig, and now lived in Cairo with a kind of emeritus status, pursuing papyri related to his specialization... He was seventy-two years old and his name was Otto Kirnberger. Two years later Dan was to see his name again, in the *Times* obituary column; and to learn that this urbane and friendly old man was in fact a world authority on the pharaonic tribute and taxation systems, and a papyrologist of "unsurpassed breadth of knowledge" 182

Also Bartholomew is a well educated man, the son of a very wealthy man who has had the privilege to attend the best of schools. His former teacher and friend describes him as "a most worthy, talented, amiable and noble friend".¹⁸³ Likewise the truthfulness of Dr Grogan's words of wisdom is enhanced by his authority as a Doctor.

Neither do these mentors use their bodies as a means to seduce the hero/ heroine to fall, as is the case with Lily and Rose in *A Magus*, Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Miranda in *The Collector*, Jane and Nancy in *Daniel Martin*, and in a way also Rebecca in *A Maggot*. Instead these men use their knowledge and authority, their great wisdom and irresistible charm.

However, a great emphasis has been put on their liberal and frank view of sexuality which starkly contrasts them to their Christian male counterpart philosophers, such as Dan's father and Anthony in *Daniel Martin*, Ayscough in *A Maggot* and Piers, a theology student and friend of Miranda in *The Collector*. Dan's father can not even talk about Dan's adolescent affair with Nancy, but only dismisses his son into a state of unknowing and misery. Anthony is portrayed as truly pathetic when he, on his deathbed, is forced to admit that in contrast to his colleges throughout his entire career has not even tried to seduce a single student. Ayscough unmercifully condemns Rebecca to hell for her sexual impurity, yet continually fails to hide his somewhat perverse interest in her private sexlife. Piers in *The Collector* is described as a sexually frustrated young man who hypocritically denies himself a sexlife, but is unable to resist desiring Miranda. Instead Piers

¹⁸²Fowles, 1977: 516

¹⁸³Fowles, 1996: 195

tries to persuade Miranda to make Scotch love to him, which Miranda explains is to “get her into bed, play with her, but not do the final thing”.¹⁸⁴ Like Eve, the Eve man instead displays a great capacity for passion, however, instead of being attractive and mysteriously seductive like Eve woman the Eve man is frank, virile and sexually experienced. G.P. in *The Collector* for example, is in contrast to Piers described as promiscuous and honest towards his own sexuality. He declares his lack of virtue to Miranda who recently has learned about his affair with her Swedish friend:

He smiled. I know what you are feeling, he seemed to say. It made me want to slap his face. I couldn't look as if I didn't care, which made it worse. He said, men are vile. I said, the vilest thing about them is that they can say that with a smile on their faces... Look Miranda, he said, those twenty long years that lie between you and me. I've more knowledge of life than you, I've lived more and betrayed more and seen more betrayed. At your age I was bursting with ideals. You think that because I can sometimes see what's trivial and what is important in art I ought to be more virtuous. But I don't want to be virtuous. My charm (if there is any) for you is simply frankness. And experience. Not goodness. I am not a good man. Perhaps morally I'm younger than you are. Can you understand that? He was only saying what I felt. I was stiff and he was supple, and it ought to be the other way around¹⁸⁵

Bartholomew in *A Maggot* is viewed as being square in terms of what a modern reader recognises as normal behaviour towards women. His twin spirit Dick likewise displays a much more modern view of sexuality than the average constrained perception allowed by contemporary convention. According to the novel he is a beast, a sexual animal, persistent in his deep perpetual love and desire for Rebecca. The novel even describes him as lust incarnate.¹⁸⁶ Other sympathetic wise men are portrayed in a similar manner. Fenwick in *Daniel Martin* for example greatly resembles G.P. in *The Collector*. Fowles describes him as: “a good raconteur, even against himself; he had a tiny touch of that rare quality, demon -a gift for being a shade sharper, more contradictory, more outrageous than normal convention permits.” He mockingly reproaching Caro “with the gentle astringency of an old hand at amusing young women.”¹⁸⁷ Equally Dan in *Daniel Martin* himself is a bit of an old rake. His young lover Jenny loves him for it and finds his great sexual experience with women immensely attractive. Even the humble German gentleman Otto Kirnberger has caught a tinge of

¹⁸⁴Fowles, 1986: 237

¹⁸⁵Fowles, 1986: 179

¹⁸⁶Fowles, 1977: 427

¹⁸⁷Fowles, 1977: 330

the passion and virility so typical for these Eve men. On especially one occasion his speech inevitably echoes G.P.'s: 'There was a little glint in his look. "Madame, I suspect you know that your sex is never more charming than when it is being wicked"'.¹⁸⁸

The general Eve man's treatment of women likewise stands in stark contrast to the average Christian man. The Christian man more or less abuses his woman, if not physically, at least mentally. Anthony is only one example of this, apart from Ayscough and Clegg. A small character named Ben in *Daniel Martin* is a frightful example of a small-minded Christian man who continually abuses his wife physically, but who remains faithful to her. Fowles describes him as a practical Christian who is palpably honest and devoted to his wife, but who has drinking problems and who could become occasionally violent towards her.¹⁸⁹ Likewise Jane's late husband Anthony is portrayed as pathetically faithful and unpassionate. Dan contemplates his adolescent friend: "I doubted if Anthony had ever truly realized the role he was meant to play. He had possessed intellectual gifts of fidelity, honesty and tolerance in many things; but no natural capacity for emotion, let alone passion."¹⁹⁰ Eve men such as G.P. in *The Collector*, Dan and Fenwick in *Daniel Martin* on the contrary are not always sexually faithful. However, they compensate this flaw -or virtue- by being irresistibly passionate and truly loving. Both Dick and Bartholomew in *A Maggot* likewise do -as opposed to Christian male characters such as Ayscough and Rebecca's father- treat Rebecca with great respect. Despite his outward animal likeness Dick is the first and only person who has ever managed to make Rebecca feel truly loved and respected.¹⁹¹

The Eve man's attitude towards other life forms is also significant. Like another sympathetic man, Andrew in *Daniel Martin*, Kirnburgers's humanism is emphasised by his interest in animals. Andrew proves himself to be an expert with sick animals and professor Kirnberger has an impressive knowledge of and

¹⁸⁸Fowles, 1977: 544

¹⁸⁹Fowles, 1977: 363, 364

¹⁹⁰Fowles, 1977: 420

¹⁹¹Fowles, 1985: 314, 333

fascination for birds.¹⁹² It is interesting to notice how Andrew and Kirnberger are starkly contrasted to Christians. Fowles writes in *A Maggot*: “Eighteenth-century man was truly Christian in his cruelty to animals. Was it not a blasphemous cock that crowed thrice, rejoicing each time the apostle Peter denied? What could be more virtuous than bludgeoning its descendants to death?”¹⁹³ It is further significant for Bartholomew in *A Maggot*, that he is studiously unafraid to enter the dark unknown, wild nature in his persistent search for mystery. To further emphasise the significance of this behaviour he is contrasted to the general Christian of the time who “had no sympathy with primordial nature. It was aggressive wildness, an ugly and all-invasive reminder of the Fall, of man’s eternal exile from the Garden of Eden; and particularly aggressive, to a nation of profit-haunted puritans, on the threshold of an age of commerce, in its flagrant uselessness.”¹⁹⁴ G.P. in *The Collector* moreover is portrayed as springlike, fresh and green.¹⁹⁵ Miranda recalls his room as a garden with shadows, stars and a silver moon, which makes her want to live and make love.¹⁹⁶ This greenness and kinship with nature is a characteristic which the Eve man shares with Eve, however, it is significant that unlike Eve, the Eve man is not portrayed as part of nature to the same extent as Eve, with the exception of Dick who represents the animal side of Bartholomew. Instead the Eve man dwells in the garden of wild nature, to enjoy it and its implicit femaleness.

The general picture of the Eve man inevitably remains profoundly sympathetic and humane. This is an impression which continually is mirrored and stressed by the portrayal of Christian philosophers. Some examples of this are Piers, who is hypocritical enough to outwardly deny himself sex but who refuses to admit to himself that also “Scotch love” is sex, and Anthony who constantly says one thing when he actually means something else, and Dan’s father who is a priest, yet steals and lies and who like Clegg, is unable to utter the

¹⁹²Fowles, 1977: 326

¹⁹³Fowles, 1996: 19

¹⁹⁴Fowles, 1996: 15

¹⁹⁵Fowles, 1986: 247, 160

¹⁹⁶Fowles, 1986: 190

word sex, yet keeps pornography in his bookshelf. The list could be made endless. Professor Kirnberger's implicitly parental role towards Dan, moreover, inevitably emphasises the profound difference between himself and Dan's biological father both in character and in philosophical conviction. Whereas Dan's father is depicted as strict, hypocritical and emotionally inhibited, the professor conveys the impression of a mentally strong but sympathetically humble, learned old man. Bartholomew in *A Maggot* is a courageous man who is not the least afraid to express his lack of faith in contemporary religion and the reader inevitably gets the impression that his philosophical ideas, as opposed to Ayscough's are expressed with great honesty and true conviction. Whereas Ayscough, for example abhors democracy, Bartholomew strongly advocates it. This political conviction inevitably enables Bartholomew to gain the modern reader's greatest sympathies. Similarly to Bartholomew, G.P. in *The Collector* likewise deeply represents humanism and socialism. One important point in his creed is that you have to be on the left politically. Even his painting implicitly represents humanity to Miranda. She tells us: "I kissed it when I unwrapped it. I've been looking at some of the lines not as lines, but as something he touched. All morning. Now. Not love, humanity."¹⁹⁷ G.P. is in many respects presented as a profoundly sincere person who is not the least ashamed to express either his hearts contempt or disgust nor its love for someone.¹⁹⁸ Miranda tells us that he is a hater of pretence, selfishness and snobbism and that he always means what he says, otherwise it would be blasphemy.¹⁹⁹ The Eve man is not perfect, however and in contrast to the Adam man his imperfectibility -a term which Fowles himself uses to describe this in *Daniel Martin*- only enhances his humanism and stresses his innate gift of inscrutable honesty. Fowles's description of a small, yet in this respect significant character in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* who somewhat echoes G.P. implicitly suggests that for the Eve man honesty lies in part in his sincerity, yet it perhaps paradoxically also lies in his habit of not being perfect, in his refusal to conform to the social

¹⁹⁷Fowles, 1986: 197

¹⁹⁸Fowles, 1986: 143

¹⁹⁹Fowles, 1986: 219, 160

standards of conventional religion: "Something honest about his life -he sinned without shame but also without hypocrisy... wine and weather- his eyes had splendid innocence- that opaque blue candour of the satanically fallen."²⁰⁰

The above quotation inevitably suggests the character of Eve man's relationship to the Christian God. Naturally as the ultimate goal of Adam's quest is to liberate himself from the constraints of the Christian religion, and as the Eve man's contextual role is to conduct him towards this goal, the Eve man's relationship to the Christian God must be retrogressive. Their dissociation with Christianity, however is perhaps not so overtly dealt with, except of course in Bartholomew's case, yet it is implicitly assumed. Unlike Eve, they are not so frequently associated with the animal or with dark imagery. However, they dissociate with the Christian God mainly in their perhaps subtle, yet significant identification with alternative Eve religions. The Professor in *Daniel Martin* not only displays a deep interest in ancient Egyptian religion, he perceptively, yet ambiguously hints that Egyptology is "no pastime for innocents".²⁰¹ His supernatural experience of timelessness adds validity to his concept of spirituality. Likewise Bartholomew in *A Maggot* displays a profound and sincere interest in ancient Greek mysticism and religious mysteries such as Stonehenge.²⁰² It is frequently suggested throughout the novel that Bartholomew is in pursuit of an alternative to his father's religion. During a visit to the Amnesbury temple Bartholomew acknowledges to his friend Mr Lacy that the ancient's knew a secret he would "give all to possess".²⁰³ He further reveals that he is in search of his life's Meridan, like the ancient Greeks.²⁰⁴ On several occasions the reader is reminded that his goal is abstract, and that it is inextricably intertwined with something feminine. Bartholomew frequently uses the analogy of a

²⁰⁰Fowles, 1969: 260

²⁰¹Fowles, 1977: 515

²⁰²Fowles, 1996: 144, 148

²⁰³Fowles, 1996: 148

²⁰⁴Fowles, 1996: 149

waiting woman, muse, bride or witch to illustrate this.²⁰⁵ Rebecca's testimony that the goal of his journey was to cure his impotence with her help and with a special kind of holy water implicitly suggests that Fowles also here, as in the Tarquina episode in *Daniel Martin* evokes Elusian symbolism so as to emphasise men's need for female mystery and spirituality. Therefore it is not surprising that the goddess, who according to Rebecca ultimately reveals herself at the cavern, is woman and a witch. The inverted prodigal son theme becomes even more explicit when the meeting between Bartholomew and the silver lady is described as a reunion of a mother with her long lost son. Another peculiar detail which gives further support for this interpretation is that the extremely significant scene where Bartholomew forces a nonplussed Rebecca to, by oath, renounce God is concluded by a fatigued Bartholomew's kneeling before an invisible Mother God: "As he comes to it, he sinks to his knees on the broadplanks and buries his bald head against it's side, as a man seeking undeserved forgiveness or the oblivion of infancy might, against a mother's skirt."²⁰⁶ Fowles subtly indicates that also G.P. in *The Collector* identifies with Eve female alternative religions. On example of this is that to Miranda his room appears as a dark garden with a moon and stars. Another such indication is made when Fowles lets him rust off an iron round wheel which according to Elusian symbolism suggests that he identifies with the earth goddess and her values.²⁰⁷ Even Dr Grogan in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, despite his outwardly Christian mask, admits that he would accept any religion as his own, and that he would gladly dance a jig on the ashes of Marlborough house, the novel's very site for Christianity, inhabited by the hypocritical, Christian, Godlike despot Mrs Poultry.

As the above study continually suggests, the characters individual religious or philosophical conviction appears to be crucial to their overall characterisation. It would be no exaggeration to suggest that Christian philosophers, with almost no exception, are portrayed as inevitably humourless, dull and stupid. The novels

²⁰⁵Fowles, 1996: 42, 175, 251-252

²⁰⁶Fowles, 1996: 58

²⁰⁷Fowles, 1986: 214

are full of such portraits. Apart from Ben and the likewise humourless Anthony and father of Dan, *Daniel Martin* for example presents Anthony's priest as a pathetically "humourless young Scotsman" who instead of offering help and support to Anthony's grieving relatives instead seems to be as much in need of help and support himself.²⁰⁸ It is interesting to notice how Fowles likewise frequently applies a technique of giving unsympathetic persons Christian names. One such example in *Daniel Martin* is Anthony's son Paul, who is described as a typical, "oddly sullen" Adam man who studiously suppresses everything emotional, who is described as a "horrifying monomaniac", "demonically selfish" who unmercifully thrashes his cousin Penny in tennis, and who with a "puritanical perversity" displays a macabre interest in caning.²⁰⁹ Other such examples are Paul and Peter in *The Ebony Tower* two immensely unsympathetic characters.

Likewise it seems clear that the religious conviction decides the overall impression of women as well. However, a significant observation in this respect is that, as opposed to Eve men, the novels very much lacks female, Christian characters. However when they do occur they are foremostly portrayed as small-minded women, suppressed or suppressing by means of male religiosity. Clegg is raised by his rigid aunt Annie who sufficiently suits this description. Clegg tells us that she is a nonconformist, however, her letter reveals her implicit association with the Christian religion and describes her as a truly god fearing person.²¹⁰ Like her male cocharacters she is hysterically afraid of sexuality, and claims that bikinis cause cancer.²¹¹ Her obsession with dirt is likewise significant.²¹² Moreover, unlike Eve she is unable to appreciate wild nature and can not see the charm with a house situated in the woods. Her letter reveals that she is unable to love Clegg. Its perpetual ranting about dirt and money, together with its inevitable lack of concern for his emotional health, reveals her true self. Eventually, Fowles makes her ultimately responsible for the horrible situation which both

²⁰⁸Fowles, 1977: 226

²⁰⁹Fowles, 1977: 303, 219, 219, 357, 358

²¹⁰Fowles, 1986: 13, 185

²¹¹Fowles, 1986: 87

²¹²Fowles, 1986: 185

Clegg and Miranda now find themselves in. Even Clegg acknowledges this when he describes her attitude towards himself and his crippled sister Mabel:

She like makes everything round her deformed too. I can't explain. Like nobody else had any right to be normal. I mean she doesn't complain outright. It's just looks she gives, and you have to be dead careful. Suppose, well, I say not thinking one evening, I nearly missed the bus this morning, I had to run like billy-o, sure as fate Aunt Annie would say, think yourself lucky you can run. Mabel wouldn't say anything, just look.²¹³

Another portrait of a Christian woman is found in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Mrs Poultney is depicted as an unmerciful tyrant, who metaphorically imprisons Sarah and abuses her mentally. She shares her obsession with dirt and money with Aunt Annie in *The Collector*. Alike Clegg's Aunt she is unable to appreciate wild nature, and strictly forbids Sarah to enter the Undercliff woods.

Phoebe, Ben's wife, in *Daniel Martin* is another sad portrait of a Christian woman. Her inability to be as green and fertile as Eve is symbolised by her infertility as well as by her habit of boiling green vegetables to mash.²¹⁴ Also she is, like Aunt Millie and Mrs Poultney, devoted to cleanliness. "Her devil remained dirt" Fowles writes.²¹⁵ Her portrait is sad and pathetic in many respects. She is continually abused by her husband, and as Dan puts it she lives in an intensely small world.²¹⁶ Dan explains that the most difficult thing to bear was their simple frame of values.²¹⁷ Her concept of God is also frightening, as she is convinced that her inability to become pregnant is a punishment from God.

Dan's Aunt Millie is described as a good but simple minded middle aged woman who under the influence of Dan's father resists her capacity to evaluate and think for herself.²¹⁸ It is interesting to notice that as opposed to Eve-women who for mostly are young, dark and mysteriously sexy, the average Adam woman, when she appears instead is middle aged, worn and slightly pathetic. The above examples are all of middle aged women. This narrative phenomenon is so consistent that even Eve women when they reach middle age

²¹³Fowles, 1986: 185

²¹⁴Fowles, 1977: 363, 364

²¹⁵Fowles, 1977: 364

²¹⁶Fowles, 1977: 367

²¹⁷Fowles, 1977: 366

²¹⁸Fowles, 1977: 88

sometimes are portrayed as pathetic Adam women. Even Nell, who in her youthful portrait is described as the woman of Babylon becomes a dotty and small-minded woman, surrounded by Victorian adornments. She even lives in a Victorian house. Likewise Jane's conversion to Catholicism and her marriage to Anthony has spiritually killed her otherwise so alive, Evisish self. When Dan meets her again he realises that: "Anthony had turned her into a cold and lifeless female prig."²¹⁹ The older staff sister, in *Mantissa* is likewise a typical portrait of a priggish moralist middle aged woman, who pathetically attempts to prevent Dr A. Delphie from using sex as a medical therapy. There is, in all of Fowles's novels, only one example of a young Christian woman. It seems to be a coherent pattern in Fowles's novels to portray Christian women as foremostly pathetic and stupid and almost consistently middle aged or older. A typical example of this is conveyed in a revealing detail in Dan's reminiscence of his father: "-he was counted a good parish man. He was endlessly patient with the most garrulous old spinsters, sympathetic to the (slightly) more enlightened".²²⁰ Apart from the naive and repressed Earnestina in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* there is only one young Christian woman represented in Fowles's canon. Her name is Dorcas, and she appears in *A Maggot* as a witness against Bartholomew and Rebecca. However, her role as a spy in Yr Grace's service inevitably makes her unsympathetic to the reader.

Christians, men or women, are consistently described as stupid, dull and humourless, unable to appreciate nature. Fowles describes the believer as a childish personality in a metaphor about humanity as seven men inhabiting a raft; "...and finally the child, the one born, as with some with perfect pitch, with perfect ignorance- the pitiful ubiquitous child, who believes that all will be explained in the end, the nightmare fade and the green shore rise."²²¹

²¹⁹Fowles, 1977: 174

²²⁰Fowles, 1977: 80

²²¹Fowles, 1993:16

However, Eve men are significant philosophers, not at all morally perfect, but always mentally superior both over other male philosophers, Adam women and even Eve women. Miranda in *The Collector*, conveys her great respect and close kinship with one of these great men, G.P.:

But this is what I feel these days. That I belong to a sort of band of people who have to stand against all the rest. I don't know who they are - famous men, dead and living, who've fought for the right things and created and painted in the right way, and unfamous people I know who don't lie about things, who try not to be lazy, who try to be human and intelligent. Yes people like G.P. for all his faults. His fault. They're not even good people. They have their weak moments. Sex moments and drink moments. Coward and money moments. They have holidays in the Ivory Tower. But a part of them is one with the band. The Few.²²²

²²²Fowles, 1986: 208

The Concept of Adam and Eve Gods in John Fowles's Fiction

Another concept introduced in *The Aristos*, is that of male and female gods. According to *The Aristos* one example of a typically male society with male gods is The Victorian Age. Hence, it is possible to draw the conclusion that Christianity according to *The Aristos* is assumed to be a male religion. The above study of the Garden of Eden theme and the characterisation of Adam and Eve in his novels inevitably supports this assumption. Unsympathetic, Christian Adamite men such as Anthony and Dan's father in *Daniel Martin* and Ayscough in *A Maggot*, etc. unquestionably link the extreme Adam to the Christian religion and the Christian God.

John Fowles has often declared himself a convinced atheist to the world. However, as an atheistic existentialist he most frequently throughout his novels and other narratives displays a profound interest in God and existential questions. In *The Aristos*, he explains: "I do not consider myself an atheist, yet this concept of "God" and our necessary masterlessness obliges me to behave in all public matters as if I were."²²³ *The Aristos* proves to be an invaluable resource for a deeper understanding of the workings of his mind in this respect. In *The Aristos* Fowles undertakes to explain what God must be and what he believes that God is not. Fowles declares that he does not believe in an active God, however, he inevitably suggests that God has an important role to play in the psyches of human beings.²²⁴ "God is" unknowable, Fowles says, "we cannot dam the spring of basic existential mystery. "God" is the energy of all questions and questing; and so the ultimate source of all action and volition."²²⁵

Fowles's ideas concerning God as presented in *The Aristos* inevitably dismiss the Christian God from everything that, to Fowles, constitutes a true concept of God. In fact, in the light of this creed Christianity

²²³Fowles, 1993: 28

²²⁴Fowles, 1993: 28

²²⁵Fowles, 1993: 28

becomes a profoundly destructive religion and its followers rather primitive in their faith. Fowles believes in a passive god, therefore the Christian idea of God as a personal force is unacceptable to him. He divines: "A god who revealed his will, who "heard" us, who answered our prayers, who was propitiable, the kind of God simple people like to imagine would be desirable: such a god would destroy all our hazard, all our purpose and all our happiness."²²⁶ Fowles furthermore declares that he is unable to believe in a god who is concerned for anything specific, but believes in a god that is concerned for the whole; something which he is convinced the Christian God is not: "this is the old and pernicious heresy of the anthropocentric universe, in which we humans are the Few and all the lower rest of the creation, the Many." Fowles explains "In such a universe we must assume a very active god; and one who is very much on our side, a suspiciously prejudiced figure to be in command of the whole."²²⁷ Above all the Christian concept of God is a totally improper response to freedom, according to Fowles. Another quotation from *The Aristos* reads: "Freedom of will is the highest human good; and it is impossible to have both that freedom and an intervening God."²²⁸ Fowles relentlessly condemns the Christian church: "The Christian churches, contrary to the philosophy of Jesus himself, have frequently made their own self-continuance their chief pre-occupation. They have fostered poverty, or indifference to it; they have forced people to look beyond life; they have abused the childish concept of hellfire,"²²⁹ The Bible, moreover is described as: "A ragbag of myths, tribal gibberish, wild vindictiveness, insane Puritanism, garbled history, absurdly one-sided propaganda"²³⁰

God and his non-existence are, as has been shown, important themes in Fowles novels. Fowles's portrayal of the Christian God is consistently conducted in an extremely negative way, so much so that God frequently becomes the devil himself. One such occasion is when Anthony and Dan in *Daniel Martin* are

²²⁶Fowles, 1993: 18

²²⁷Fowles, 1993: 24

²²⁸Fowles, 1993: 26

²²⁹Fowles, 1993: 106

²³⁰Fowles, 1993: 107

finally reconciled on Anthony's death bed, after many years of silence. Anthony expresses his profound regret for how he has lived his life, how arrogantly he has professed Catholicism and how deeply sorry he is that he through his way of living, has suppressed and spiritually suffocated his wife Jane. During this conversation Anthony and Dan comes to discuss Becket and supposedly *Waiting for Godot*. Anthony has finally realised that no God is watching him and that the Christian concept of a personal, active God, concerned for anything but the whole such as Fowles describes in *The Aristos* is evil:

You must allow me the suspicion that the play isn't so bad as the doomsters pretend. After all, the one evil thing in creation is also the one thing that doesn't think." He gave Dan one of his quizzes. "I'm still defeated by the conundrum of God. But I have the Devil clear." "And what is he?" "Not seeing whole." He stared at the floor. "One of my students a year or two ago informed me that the twentieth century was like realizing we're all actors in a bad comedy at the moment as we realize that no one wrote it, no one is watching it, and that the only other theatre in town is the graveyard.²³¹

In *A Maggot* Rebecca's revelation in the cavern is another example of a dark Fowlesian portrayal of the Christian God. Apart from Ayscough's hideous personification of a God who unmercifully judges and condemns and arrogantly belittles his subjects, Rebecca's two versions of the cavern episode both portray an equally unsympathetic God, though in slightly modified versions. The first version, retold by Jones, describes Jesus Christ and the Father as they watch a girl burn to death in hellfire, a female corpse being eaten by maggots, and a devil that both rapes Rebecca and exposes her to these heart tearing scenes. The other version is lighter and more pleasurable with heavenly green and beautiful nice, ordered orchards and golden highways. Nevertheless, this modification also displays a nonetheless implicitly unjust sentence over an innocent, young Rebecca, in burning flames, silently watched by her apathetic parents and by the impotent father and son. Ayscough apprehends the first version as horrifying and the other as childish and blasphemous. However, what neither he nor Jones realise is that Rebecca's versions, and especially the first is a reflection of his own Christian philosophy. Ayscough is just as unmerciful towards the sinners that comes before him. He speaks gladly about damnation and judgement day.²³² He threatens Jones with hanging and

²³¹Fowles, 1977: 193

²³²Fowles, 1996: 159

delights in the thought of roasting him.²³³ In an interview with James R. Baker Fowles explains that his intentions behind *June Eternal*; the second version, was to illustrate the living shaker society.²³⁴ However, it is possible to perceive that also the first version is a portrayal of the Christian God. Fowles writes in *The Aristos*:

Some make an active god of their own better natures; a benevolent father, a gentle mother, a wise brother, a charming sister. Some make an active god from attributes: such desirable human attributes as mercy, concern, justice. Some make an active god of their own worse natures; a god who is sadistically cruel or profoundly absurd; a god who absconds; a black exploiter of the defenceless individual; the venomous tyrant of Genesis.²³⁵

This is precisely what Rebecca does here. She presents us with various concepts of God. Neary points out that both versions of the story are true, and to Rebecca they certainly are, because she knows what Ayscough has failed to understand- that God is only what you chose to see him or her as, only a reflection of your own benevolent or sadistic nature. However, the overall impression behind these two versions, in combination with the portrayal of Ayscough and her slightly pathetic fellow Shaker brothers inevitably remains immensely dark.

Shymal Bagchee quotes the same statement and argues that Fowles implicitly suggests his own portrayal of the God of Genesis embodied in Clegg in *The Collector*.²³⁶ Miranda's disappointment with this God culminates in vehement rage. She realises that God is dark and evil. Her insistent prayers remain unanswered, and she cries out in loathing and despair:

I hate God, I hate whatever made this world, I hate whatever made the human race, made men like Caliban possible and situations like this possible. If there is a God he is a great loathsome spider in the darkness. He *cannot be good*... The older the world becomes, the more obvious it is. The bomb and the tortures in Algeria and the starving babies in the Congo. It gets bigger and darker... People won't admit it, they're too busy grabbing to see that the lights have fused. They can't see the darkness and the spiderface beyond the great web of it all. That there is always this if you scratch at the surface of happiness and goodness. The black and the black and the black... Oh God if there is a God I hate beyond hate.²³⁷

In *Daniel Martin* the evil God reveals himself in reminiscence from Dan's childhood through his father who bans him from contact with Nancy when their affair has been discovered. Dan lies in his bed

²³³Fowles, 1996: 273 and 213

²³⁴Baker, 1986: 672

²³⁵Fowles, 1993: 16

²³⁶Bagchee, 1980-1981: 224

²³⁷Fowles, 1986: 255

contemplating: "I thought a thousand things; and I knew I was trapped by convention, by respectability, by class, by Christianity, by the ubiquitous wartime creed of discipline and self-restraint as the ultimate goods. But the worst of all was knowing that I had asked for this terrible disaster. I believed in God again that night: he had my father's face and I cried with loathing of his power."²³⁸

It is significant that Fowles uses Dan's father as a symbol of God here, significant in that aspect that he also represents a Father religion -or perhaps one could say the Father religion- to Fowles. It is significant also in that aspect that fathers throughout all of Fowles's canon signify God or simply bad, unsympathetic values. Dopp and Olshen have written an article on Fowles's autobiography *The Tree* and his relationship with his own father. They have recognised a recurring antipathy between protagonists and their fathers in Fowles's novels and argue further that Fowles's heroes and heroines are characteristically orphans.²³⁹ However, this phenomenon seems to extend to almost all fathers in all novels. The only sympathetic, good fathers who are still alive are father figures that are not biological fathers, such as Andrew in *Daniel Martin* or Uncle Dick in *The Collector*. Miranda's father is perhaps not significantly unsympathetic, but he is absent. He does not hear her cries at her deathbed, and even though he is a doctor, he is impotent and unable to help her, just like God.

The father is indeed an important symbol for Fowles when reflecting upon his concept of the Christian God. John Neary accurately argues that atheism and rebellion against a father are part of a Fowlesian pattern.²⁴⁰ Fowles seems to see himself through his heroes, as the prodigal son who refuses to return to his father's home. In fact this Biblical parable is frequently used to illustrate the son's antagonism towards his father who symbolises God. One such occasion comes to us in another reminiscence from Dan's childhood, in Fowles biographical novel *Daniel Martin*, where his father very perceptively jokes: "I have a lost son. But I

²³⁸Fowles, 1977: 401-402

²³⁹Dopp, Jamie and Olshen, Barry N. "Fathers and sons: Fowles's *The Tree* and Autobiographical Theory" Mosaic. A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature, 22:4 1983: 34

²⁴⁰Neary, 1992: 97

have found a gargoyle”.²⁴¹ Dan furthermore describes himself as a prodigal uncle who is allowed back into the family after the death of Anthony: the principal God figure in the family.²⁴² Dan describes his sentiments towards Anthony’s dissociation from him, and identifies himself with Lucifer: “I was bitterly sarcastic to Andrea about my reception, when I got back to town; too bitter, as she soon pointed out. I suppose I felt failed and fallen. Like Lucifer: *I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...* and set it among the stars of Hollywood.”

The storyline of *The Maggot* can be perceived as an inverted analogue to this parable. Bartholomew is the lost son of a mighty Mr Yr Grace. This eminent title and the enormous secrecy around his true identity suggest that Yr Grace represents God himself. The son has embarked on a journey in flight from his stern, unjust, pathetic and almighty father.²⁴³ His father is, for example described as “an Oriental Despot” to Bartholomew.²⁴⁴ Moreover, the story tells us that the son has chosen not to be his father’s son any more.²⁴⁵ Ayscough furthermore contemplates, in a letter to Yr Grace that Bartholomew had been “in unholy union with all decency abhors; and driven to it by a malevolent and unreasoning hatred and resentment not only of his noble father, but of the sacred principles of all respectable society and belief.”²⁴⁶ Subsequently Ayscough divines: “in all matters but of blood, his Lordship was indeed as a changeling, and not his true son.”²⁴⁷ Fowles has even given Bartholomew an elder brother, who has remained dutifully obedient to their father.²⁴⁸ The analogue is made explicit when Ayscough compares Yr Grace to Rebecca’s father and says: “An august parent may differ in all else from a humbler one. But in this, the loss of a son, they are as one,”²⁴⁹

²⁴¹Fowles, 1977: 93

²⁴²Fowles, 1977: 409

²⁴³Fowles, 1996: 129, 130

²⁴⁴Fowles, 1996: 190

²⁴⁵Fowles, 1996: 190

²⁴⁶Fowles, 1996: 448

²⁴⁷Fowles, 1996: 449

²⁴⁸Fowles, 1996: 135

²⁴⁹Fowles, 1996: 411

However, the prodigal son theme appears in other contexts as well. Fowles's short novel *Mantissa* likewise seems to allude to the inverted prodigal son theme. Raymond J. Wilson, reveals, in his article on Celtic Myth in Fowles's "The Ebony Tower" that A. Delphi is the name of a play in which the son of a wealthy man leaves his father to marry a slave dancing girl.²⁵⁰ Poor Koko from Fowles's short story collection "The Ebony Tower", in which a writer is robbed by a young man who eventually burns his scripts, might be viewed as another. Foster points out that:

Poor Koko is the only work in which the conflict does not involve gender as a major issue. Because these two characters are male, the terms of their antagonism are necessarily placed elsewhere, chiefly on age and class. Indeed the older man calls attention to this fact by his choice of title: Koko, he tells his readers, is a Japanese word for "correct filial behaviour, for the proper attitude of son to father."²⁵¹

Fowles's autobiography *The Tree* deals almost exclusively with the conflict between his puritanical father's well ordered and planned garden -which is a metaphor for his restricted puritanical world- in contrast to Fowles's own wild, chaotic one -a metaphor for the green, permissive world also describes in his article on Thomas Hardy. It is interesting to notice how Fowles's description of his father and Fowles's ideas of Christianity's God are so inextricably intertwined that the concepts blur: "He had himself been severely pruned by history and family circumstance, and this was his answer, his reconciliation to his fate - his platonic ideal of the strictly controlled and safe, his Garden of Eden." The philosophical chasm which underlies the two gardens is clear:

Those trees were in fact his truest philosophy, and his love of actual philosophy, the world of abstract ideas, was essentially (like his love of trenchant lawyers, with secateurs in their mouths) no more than a facet of his hatred of natural disorder. Good philosophers prune the chaos of reality and train it into fixed shapes, thereby forcing it to yield valuable and delicious fruit - or at least in theory... What he abhorred, I adored.²⁵²

The above analysis of the Garden of Eden theme displays how John Fowles, in his novels, focuses on the importance of dissociating with the Christian God. The Godgame appears to be a process which ultimately

²⁵⁰Wilson, Raymond J. "Fowles Allegory of Literary Invention: *Mantissa* and Contemporary theory" *Twentieth Century Literature* v. 36 Spring '90: 70

²⁵¹Foster, 1994: 99

²⁵²Fowles, 1992: 8, 23-24

leads the hero to a revelation of the non-existence of god and the destructive pattern which subsumes Christian faith. Fowles calls this process a Godgame. At a surface level Fowles appears to take an entirely humanist approach to the mystery of God:

If there was some central scheme beneath the (more Irish than Greek) stew of intuitions about the nature of human existence -and of fiction- it lies perhaps in the alternative title, whose rejection I sometimes regret: *The Godgame*. I did intend Conchis to exhibit a series of masks representing human notions of God, from the supernatural to the jargon-ridden scientific... The destruction of such illusions seems to me still an eminently humanist aim.²⁵³

Most critics seem to interpret Fowles's quest theme accordingly. Avrom Fleishman describes Conchis's Godgame in *The Magus*:

This man decides to play god for the men of his day, commanding them to be free by first asserting and then gradually withdrawing his control of their lives. That is the Godgame, as played in the novel. It rests on the notion that a man can teach another man to be free by playing god to him and then revealing that he is not a god, that there is no god and that each man must be his own god.²⁵⁴

However, a closer study of Fowles novels points towards a multiplexed and ambiguous existential conviction in the author's relationship to God. To Fowles, God in his/ her complete absence has a profoundly important roll to fill in human existence: Fowles words: "Mystery or unknowing is energy. As soon as a mystery is explained it ceases to be a source of energy"... "God" is unknowable, we cannot dam the spring of basic existential mystery. God is the energy of all questions and questing; and so the ultimate source of all action and volition." are the words which continuously echo throughout his entire collection of work.²⁵⁵ One of his most celebrated narrative devices is his frequent use of mystery. These mysteries often suggest to Fowles feminine religious alternatives to the Christian God.

One answer to the conundrum of God, which is frequently suggested in Fowles's narratives is the notion discussed in *The Aristos* of a "deus abscondis"; the absconded God who has created the world only to

²⁵³Fowles, 1985: 10

²⁵⁴Fleishman, Avrom "The Magus of the Wizard of the West" *Journal of Modern Literature* 5, 1976: 297-314: 300

²⁵⁵Fowles, 1993: 28

leave it to its own destiny.²⁵⁶ This is a widely acknowledged concept of God in Fowles novels. John Neary, for example, sees Bartholomew in *A Maggot* as a typical *deus abscondis*.²⁵⁷ Foster moreover notices:

The individual, having broken loose from its herd, is free to the extent that no one is watching his actions or that no one cares. Fowles writes in *The Aristos*, and elsewhere, of the sign of God being His absence, that the truly omnipotent creator would not meddle in day-to-day issues of existence, that any creator's second act would be to abscond (19, 22-28). Miranda realises during her captivity in *The Collector* that, even if God exists, his effect on her is so non-existent that she is effectively alone.²⁵⁸

The concept of the absconded God is used in *Daniel Martin* as well, here exemplified by Anthony who dramatically chooses to abscond, to take his own life and leave Jane and Dan to their own destiny. James W. Sollish moreover rightly argues that *The Magus* and *The Ebony Tower*, also contain absconding Gods personified by Conchis and Mr Breasly.²⁵⁹

This concept of God is taken from Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher who Fowles claims has inspired him in his philosophical work *The Aristos*. Both Gian Balsamo and Paul H. Lorenz have discussed Heraclitus's influence on Fowles novels.²⁶⁰ Balsamo for example claims that the mysterious Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* personifies a Heraclitan child god who changes destinies by the playful whimsical throwing of a dice.²⁶¹ Whether this was Fowles's true intention behind his character must remain unsaid; however, what can be claimed is that the mysteriously hazardous, chaotic, non authoritative concept of God inevitably remains inherently feminine to Fowles.

Another example of Fowles's concept of God reveals itself in his relationship to wild nature, which in his autobiography *The Tree* represents a philosophical alternative to his father's well ordered puritanical

²⁵⁶'If there had been a creator, his second act would have been to disappear.' Fowles, 1993: 19

²⁵⁷Neary, 1992: 185

²⁵⁸Foster, 1994: 9

²⁵⁹Sollish, 1983: 5

²⁶⁰Lorenz, Paul H. "Heraclitus against the Barbarians: John Fowles's *The Magus*" *Twentieth century Literature* v. 42 Spring '96: 69-87 : 74

Balsamo, Gian. "The Narrative Text as Historical Artifact: The Case of John Fowles" *Image and Ideology in modern / Postmodern Discourse* 1991:137

²⁶¹Balsamo, 1991: 137

orchard. It is possible to perceive that Fowles apprehends nature not only in terms of chasm and revolt, but also as religiously mysterious. He enlightens the reader on the religious significance that nature has to him:

...there was also, I suspect, some religious element in my feeling towards woods. Their mysterious atmospheres, their silences,... In them we stand among older, larger and infinitely other beings, remoter from us than the most bizarre other non-human forms of life: blind, immobile, speechless (or speaking only in Baudelaire's *confuses parables*), waiting... altogether very like the only form a universal god could conceivably take.²⁶²

John Neary, reflects over this and argues that Fowles has a profound, even liturgical sense of religious mystery, however, he argues that it is an entirely natural religion: "a Karl Barthian transcendent God, for Fowles, is precisely what cannot exist. Fowles "other" is wholly immanent in nature, and is also so hidden -so absent- that it almost cannot be talked about."²⁶³ However non-existent the gods may be in Fowles's natural religion it nevertheless has a strikingly feminine tinge: Fowles describes the dark Wistman Woods of his childhood: "Perhaps it is this passive, patient nature of their system of self-preservation that has allowed man, despite his ancient fears of what they may harbour in terms of other creatures and the supernatural, to forgive them in one aspect, to see something that is also protective, maternal, even womblike in their silent debts."²⁶⁴ Fowles continually interprets nature in implicitly Evistic terms. He describes nature as mobile and shifting, a stark contrast to Adamite religiosity: "As we watch, it is so to speak rewriting, reformulating, repainting, rephotographing itself. It refuses to stay fixed and fossilised in the past."²⁶⁵ It is also noticeable how his portrayal of nature strikingly resembles his portrayal of women, when he defines it as wicked and sensual, even erotic.²⁶⁶

The religious element in nature is likewise suggested in his novels. One example of this is Fowles's novel *Daniel Martin*. Paul H. Lorenz, for example argues that *Daniel Martin* centres round a number of

²⁶²Fowles, John. *The Tree*, St Alabamas: The Sumach Press, 1992: 62

²⁶³Neary, 1992: 92

²⁶⁴Fowles, 1992: 24, 78

²⁶⁵Fowles, 1992: 53

²⁶⁶Fowles, 1992: 68, 63

moments of religious significance in Dan's life.²⁶⁷ The Nile is an important site for personal development in this novel. It encourages Dan to reflect over his life and the negative way in which his father's ghost still haunts him. Above all, it offers a mysteriously female contrast to outmoded Christianity. This green, liquid, eternally fertile and blue skied world is a dark, silent, yet wise goddess who in opposition to Christianity encourages freedom of self and courage to face reality;

Dan went to the window and stared down at the dark silence of the Nile: endless, indifferent, like time itself. He felt obscurely trapped, not master of his own destiny at all, at a nadir from his moments of happiness at Thorncombe. Strangely his mind slipped away from the nocturnal view to his father; to a wondering... whether he hadn't been formed in his father's image and in a sense not too far removed from that father's God and *his* son; almost, that is, for a secret paternal purpose, though in Dan's case it would be more accurately called a paternal defect. He thought of the old man's flight into stasis, unchangingness, immemorial ritual and safe tradition... But perhaps it was simply that the old man had found -by hazard and unthinkingly, since Christianity in this context is no more than the answer to fear- what his son was searching for. Dan's solution had been, like some kinds of animal, to find safety in movement; to be Jenny's suitcase in eternal transit, a windblown ball of tumbleweed. His father had chosen attachment to established order, social and metaphysical;... in both cases there was a same flaw of nature: a need not to question, to ban certain possibilities.²⁶⁸

Fowles explicitly emphasises the religious element in the Nile when he lets Dan compare it to the Bible and contemplate: "the Nile did seem to possess a metaphysical charm beside it's more obvious physical ones. It cleansed and simplified, it set all life in perspective".²⁶⁹

As mentioned previously, nature is frequently described as typically female. This is the case in Fowles's portrayal of the Nile as well. The elephantine Island, which Dan and Jane visit during their trip is portrayed as "vaguely feminine", "a place to dream in", and another island as "a place out of time, a womb, where all had seemed potential."²⁷⁰ However, the Nile with its green islands is feminine also in that aspect that it continually presents alternative religious perceptions of life. Its numerous encounters with foreign gods and goddesses have a profound impact on Dan's life. It inevitably helps him to re-evaluate his life and rediscover his passion for Jane. Fowles writes: "The Nile and its landscapes they grew quickly to love- to love again, in Dan's case.

²⁶⁷Lorenz, Paul H. "Epiphany among the ruins: Etruscan Places in John Fowles's *Daniel Martin*" *The Texas Review* 11: 1-2 1990, Spring Summer: 78

²⁶⁸Fowles, 1977: 504 The Nile is described as green, liquid, eternally female, and wise: 527

²⁶⁹Fowles, 1977: 526

²⁷⁰Fowles, 1977: 593, 613

Its waters seemed to reach not merely back to the heart of Africa, but into that of time itself. This was partly the effect of the ancient sites, and of the ancient ways of life of the fellaheen villages and fields they saw as they passed: the minarets and the palm groves, the women with their water-jars”.²⁷¹ When Dan watches a fellaheen who in Egyptian mythology waits for a train that will never come he is strengthened in his decision to try a new medium -the novel instead of the cinema- and to start a new life. The trip gradually moves him towards a spiritual closeness to Jane, and enables him to grasp the difference between Eros and Agape.²⁷² In the temple of Philae his growing spiritual affection for Jane engenders a sensual aspect as well.²⁷³ Fowles writes “In simple fact he felt a little bewitched by what these few days on the Nile seemed to have done to him: both calmed and unsettled.”²⁷⁴ Finally Jane surrenders to her love for Dan when she, outside the temple of Baal in Palmyra, a now ruined temple in a deserted Adamite landscape, encounters a hag with her puppies and realises, as Paul H. Lorenz suggests, that she cannot sacrifice herself to protect her offspring as the hag does and as puritanical Christianity demands. She must free herself from such false perceptions of love.²⁷⁵

Also Gods from Greek mythology such as Isis and Osiris and Eurodyce are evoked as helping for Dan to progress.²⁷⁶ The encounter with the god and goddess affects Dan on an emotional level much more than his father’s religion has ever done:

.. there was another great bas-relief there, of Isis massaging up the penis of Osiris at her husband’s annual resurrection from the dead. Dan remembered it well from his previous visit, a strangely eager tenderness in the goddess’s face as she knelt over her hibernating consort, the echo of the Persephone legend...and remembering a private episode with Andrea. Because of her illness she had been off sex for some time, and the ancient erotic image, even though it had been successfully bowdlerized by Coptic Christians and Muslims, had brought a small resurrection to them as well as later that day.²⁷⁷

²⁷¹Fowles, 1977: 526

²⁷²Fowles, 1977: 565, 600

²⁷³Fowles, 1977: 586

²⁷⁴Fowles, 1977: 563

²⁷⁵Lorenz, 1990: 81

²⁷⁶Fowles, 1977: 536, 593

²⁷⁷Fowles, 1977: 536

Another significant religious experience comes to Dan in the form of a transcendental experience. The professor has told Dan and Jane about an experience of timelessness. Dan has a similar “blackout, an epilepsy, ominous unpleasant”, where he realises he has to make his own decisions, has to choose between Jane and Jenny.²⁷⁸ Dan also has other religious experiences. One such occasion is when he and his friends swim in Tarquina. Dan, in contrast to Anthony, can apprehend the true religious mysticism of the moment:

We made a circle, talking about the phenomenon, swirling our arms through the mild water... Four heads without bodies; touches beneath the water... Perhaps those beautiful tomb-walls somewhere inland behind the beach; perhaps the fact that the holiday was near its end; no something deeper than that, a mysterious unison, and strangely uncarnal, in spite of our naked bodies. I have had very few religious moments in my life. The profound difference between Anthony and myself- and our types of mankind- is that I did for a few moments there feel unaccountably happy; yet I could see that for him, the supposedly religious man, this was nothing more than a faintly embarrassing midnight jape... It was a moment that had both infinity and evanescence- an intense closeness, yet no more durable than the tiny shimmering organisms in the water around us.²⁷⁹

Paul H. Lorenz's argues, in his article on Etruscan places in Fowles's fiction, that this is the first of several positive religious experiences that Dan has.²⁸⁰ He interprets this experience as a recreation of a Vestal rite in the ancient European tradition and argues that the conflict between Aryans who worshipped the Christian God and ancient agricultural Europeans who worshipped the great earth mother -also Astarte in classical Greek tradition- is the focus of the whole novel and that Fowles clearly identifies with the values of the earth goddess.²⁸¹ In ancient Etruscan tradition square symbols represent the values of celestial gods whereas round symbols represent the values of the earth goddess.²⁸² The masculine is further symbolised with fire whereas the feminine is symbolised by water.²⁸³ In this rite of spiritual renewal the circle of vestal, androgynous virgins guard the masculine fire.²⁸⁴ However Lorenz points out: “It is significant that the dancers in the novel dance around the warm feminine waters of the Mediterranean rather than the masculine fires of

²⁷⁸Fowles, 1977: 571, 579

²⁷⁹Fowles, 1977: 115

²⁸⁰Lorenz, 1990: 79

²⁸¹Lorenz, 1990: 79

²⁸²Lorenz, 1990: 80

²⁸³Lorenz, 1990: 80

²⁸⁴Lorenz, 1990: 80

the heart. This suggests that Fowles believes the repository of the twentieth century's life force is essentially feminine and that it is feminine power which is now in need of renewal."²⁸⁵ Another interesting piece of information which Lorenz presents us with is that in ancient times the purpose of a journey to Tarquina was to learn the will of the gods.²⁸⁶ This is ultimately also the purpose of Dan's journey, he argues. It is possible to perceive that Fowles uses the Vestal rite symbolism also on other occasions. One example of this is Fowles's *The Maggot*. In Rebecca's and Jones's versions the purpose of Bartholomew's journey, was to find holy water to cure his impotence.²⁸⁷

Daniel Martin frequently speaks of whole sight in religious terms. Fowles opens his novel with a poem of George Seferis and the words: "Whole sight; or all the rest is desolation"²⁸⁸ Patricia J. Boomsma has noticed that Dan has several transcendental experiences in *Daniel Martin*. She argues that in these experiences the emphasis is put on relationships and the desire for whole sight. The Tarquina episode is one example of this, she argues. Boomsma discusses another transcendental experience which the professor shares with Dan and Jane which she calls an absolute relationship and explains: "The man and the painting become one, the relationship is absolute. This is the ultimate whole sight. The real behind the images is that one is not separate from others or the world, but part of them."²⁸⁹ This strange closeness can be found also in other episodes in the novel. Two such examples are Dan's imagined relationship with Cleo and Thalia, and Jenny's account of a supposed love affair with The Prick and Katherine which she describes as "together therapy". These experiences are both described as sexual yet uncarnal just like the supernatural episode in Tarquina. Jenny

²⁸⁵Lorenz, 1990: 80

²⁸⁶Lorenz, 1990: 80

²⁸⁷Fowles, 1996: 251

²⁸⁸Fowles, 1977: 1

²⁸⁹ Boomsma, Patricia J. "Whole Sight: Fowles, Lucacs, and *Daniel Martin*" *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 8:2, 1980 - 81:333

explains: "There was a togetherness of some kind. Not sexual... It seemed sexless, like a child's... It was mysterious, Dan. And innocent, you can't imagine."²⁹⁰

Lorenz has written a second article which argues that Conchis's godgame in *The Magus*, is a civilised celebration of life in the ancient Greek tradition.²⁹¹ One peculiar piece of information which he presents us with is that Conchis name symbolises feminine mystery.²⁹² Mc Daniel's article "*The Magus*: Fowles's Tarot Quest" deals with Tarot symbolism in the same novel. She draws parallels between the plot in *A Magus* and primitive shaman initiation rites and argues that this ritual has a specifically feminine character.²⁹³ One peculiar piece of information which perhaps supports her idea is that Fowles likes to compare himself to a tribal shaman and has frequently done so.²⁹⁴

Fowles's frequent usage of Classical Greek religion is widely acknowledged. Thorpe, Wilson, Neary and Hagopian all discuss this phenomenon. It seems evident that Greek religion is, to Fowles, a more sympathetic and also a more feminine religion than Christianity. There is an ever-present chasm between these religions throughout Fowles's fiction. *Daniel Martin* and Dan's meeting with Osiris and Isis is one aforementioned example of this. However, *A Maggot* is also loaded with this dichotomy. The mysterious, ancient Greek religion which fascinates Bartholomew is constantly confronted with stern Christian convention. Also in *The Collector* we are presented with a female alternative to the absent Christian God. On her deathbed Miranda repeatedly calls to God, her father and to her sister for help. God and her father are hopelessly out of reach of her appeals; however, in a hallucination Miranda does have a meeting with someone, possibly her sister Minnie who appears as a female goddess:

Dream. Extraordinary. Walking in the Ash grove at L. I look up through the trees. I see an aeroplane in the sky. I know it will crash. Later I see where it has crashed. I am frightened to go on. A girl walks towards me. Minny? I can't see. She is

²⁹⁰Fowles, 1977: 470-471

²⁹¹Lorenz, 1996: 74

²⁹²Lorenz, 1996: 75

²⁹³Mc Daniel, 1980-1981: 252.

²⁹⁴Fowles, 262, Vipond, Dianne. / Fowles "An Unholy inquisition" *Twentieth Century Literature* v.42 Spring '96: 12

in peculiar Greek clothes- drapery. White. Seems to know me but I do not know her (not Minny). Never close. I want to be close. With her. I wake up.²⁹⁵

Fowles uses the concept of the muse in almost all of his novels, and, as we have seen, all his female characters have the role of inspiring and teasing the male writer, or his male counterpart to progress. Fowles's heroine Erato in *Mantissa* is only the clearest example of this. His article "Hardy and the Hag" is a very important clarifying of these ideas. Just like Jungian psychotherapy describes the unconscious as a dark garden in which the mother archetype which must be encountered to provide a new life with greater self-consciousness so equally Fowles interpret the muse or Well Beloved as a symbol of greenness and eroticism to inspire male creativity.²⁹⁶ In "Hardy and the Hag", as in the rest of Fowles's narratives, woman is inextricably intertwined with the green garden and with the sexuality it represents.

Woman and the sexuality she personifies in her role as muse is offered as an alternative contrast to Christian religion. Nell and Dan's love as opposed to Jane and Anthony's asexual love in *Daniel Martin* is only one of many examples of this. Nell, who is described as a sexpot persona and the woman of Babylon, and Dan, identify themselves with the ancient Etruscians and their own sexuality while the other couple has falsely chosen an attachment to an empty Catholicism:

If we all laughed at his fussing there, he made us laugh in turn about the sillier Catholic side of Rome. They both wore their religiosity very lightly. Nell and I used to tease them about Sunday Mass: they would debate (putting it on for us) churches like a pair of gourmets over a Michelin guide. We used to celebrate our own mass while they were out, making love in the sun on the terrace. We decided they were incipiently square, but nice to know. The real bible that summer, for all four of us was Sea and Sardina. Imperial Rome, we agreed, was vulgar beyond belief. All good lay with Lawrence and the Etruscians.²⁹⁷

The example of Dan's encounter with Osiris and Isis is another example of this. Jenny, moreover is a muse who entirely personifies sex and who has become Dan's substitute for Christian religion.²⁹⁸ *A Maggot*

²⁹⁵Fowles, 1986: 257

²⁹⁶Fowles, 1977, Hardy and the Hag

²⁹⁷Fowles, 1977: 59, 72, 114. Nell is described as a sexpot persona on p. 59 and 72 and as the Scarlet Woman of Babylon on p. 114.

²⁹⁸Fowles, 1977: 504

likewise contrasts Christianity with sexuality and refers to sex as Cyprian rites.²⁹⁹ The muse must be seen as a challenger of the Christian God, not only because she represents sexuality but because she represents imagination, or inspiration, which in *The Aristos* are the only characteristics inevitably ascribed to the Serpent.

The muse's role as Serpent, in antagonism towards God, is especially illustrated in *A Maggot*, where Rebecca and Bartholomew are set as the underestimated Lucifer in revolt against a stern God in a Milton inspired drama. Fowles encourages this reading of his novel by his consequent habit of clashing black art and Christianity, and by his clear allusions to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Mr Lacy explains of Bartholomew: "And he said, I believe they knew the book and the story of this world, to the very last page, as you may know your Milton- for I carried his great work in my pocket, Mr Ayscough, And Mr B. had inquired of what I read."³⁰⁰ This is significant since the novel to an enormous extent revolves around the Bible's concept of the last days of this world. If Fowles's first novel, *The Collector* is a travesty of Eden, this novel is a travesty of The Book of Revelation. One interesting piece of proof for this interpretation is that a certain Ezekiel is one of the first witnesses of this extraordinary caravan.³⁰¹ The novel frequently discusses Christ's second coming and inevitably revolves around Rebecca's visions and revelations on judgement day. God, also presented in the shape of the devil gives her visions containing all kinds of horrifying scenarios of the world's last days, prophesies which can be related to The Book of Revelation. A significant detail in this respect is the words which Rebecca exclaims after her horrifying experience in the cave: "The maggot, the maggot". This does not only, as Foster points out echo Joseph Conrads *Heart of Darkness*, but also the source which possibly inspired also Conrad, namely the Book of Revelation, whose author testifies: "Then I looked, and I heard an eagle that was flying high in the air say in a loud voice, "O horror! horror! How horrible it will be for all those who live

²⁹⁹Fowles, 1996: 188

³⁰⁰Fowles, 1996: 151

³⁰¹Fowles, 1996: 75

on earth when the sound comes from the trumpets that the other three angels must blow!”³⁰² The novel’s frequent references to Antichrist and its personification of the beast and the whore in Dick and Rebecca also speaks for this interpretation. However, as Fowles takes care to point out, Rebecca is inventing her visions, which, just like Conchis’s ultimately consists of metaphors and illusions of God. Bartholomew’s and her own creed, inevitably echoes their creators. Fowles writes in *The Aristos*:

If Christians were to say that these incredible events and the doctrines and rituals evolved from them are to be understood metaphorically, I could become a Christian... Intelligent Athenians of the fifth century knew their gods were metaphors, personifications of forces and principles’ ... There are many signs that the Athenization of Christianity has begun. The second coming of Christ will be the realisation that Jesus of Nazareth was supremely human, not supremely divine; but this will be to relegate him to the ranks of the philosophers and reduce the vast apparatus of ritual, church and priesthood to an empty shell. ³⁰³

³⁰⁴ Her child is frequently compared to Jesus, but we are carefully informed that the child is not divine; “this long-drowned creature risen from the ocean depths, yet miraculously still alive. It is very plainly not divine, it’s face crinkled, obstinate, still more sea than air.”³⁰⁵

Despite the novel’s rather explicit repudiation of Christianity, the underlying message might be perhaps too much embedded in metaphors and symbolism not to pass unnoticed by the reader. Gian Balsamo, for example, is stunned by Fowles’s unexpected devotion to Christian dissent and exclaims:

Only the reader who knows how to make sense out of such a surprising, provocative epilogue, will not be put off by *A Maggot*. What brings a selfdeclared atheist like John Fowles to write an imposing novel in order to celebrate the unknown events that preceded the birth of a woman, a religious leader, in his opinion a champion of dissent? And why is it in the eighties, a decade of order and conformism, an artist of the integrity of John Fowles feels compelled to consecrate his literary efforts to the celebration of dissent?³⁰⁶

However, Fowles gives us the answer himself in the very same epilogue. His celebration of the Shakers is based partly on its portrayal of the trinity as partly female. Moreover, Fowles has in this novel made The Shakers a personification not of the assent of Christianity, but of dissent. It is praised for its inherent obstinacy

³⁰²*Good News Bible*, Bible Society of South Africa, Cape Town, 1983: 312

³⁰³Fowles, 1993: 105

³⁰⁴Fowles, 1993: 105

³⁰⁵Fowles, 1996: 451, 453, 420, 452

³⁰⁶Balsamo, 1991:135

towards established religion, its humanism and inevitable Evism as opposed to established religions' supposed godliness and Adamism. Fowles writes: "Dissent is a universal human phenomenon...We associate it especially with religion, since all new religions begin with dissent, that is a refusal to believe what those in power would have us believe- what they would command and oblige us, in all ways from totalitarian tyranny and brutal force to media manipulation and cultural hegemony, to believe."³⁰⁷

John M. Neary argues that Fowles in *Mantissa* and *A Maggot* has moved, from a plain atheism in his previous works to a spiritual perception of life.³⁰⁸ However, despite the novel's positive portrayal of the ancient Greek beliefs, the overall impression conveyed by Bartholomew and Rebecca's creed, together with Fowles's strong usage of the inverted prodigal son analogy, his references to Milton and The Book of Revelation and his romanticised usage of black imagery to emphasise Rebecca's and Bartholomew's antagonism towards the Christian God perhaps rather suggest a move towards atheism for Fowles.

A study of Fowles general portrayal of God shows that he studiously conveys a strong antagonism towards the Christian God which he perceives as Adamite and that *A Maggot* is inevitably only a continuation of an already introduced spirituality in his works. Fowles frequently toys with spirituality of various kinds, from Shamanism, Elusian mystery cults to classical Greek religion, which he aspires to present as inevitably Evisticly tinged. *Daniel Martin* in particular portrays an Evistic epiphany which not only carries religious meaning but ultimately helps Dan to re-evaluate and reconstruct his life. Also *A Maggot* presents Evistic alternative spirituality in the form of black art and ancient Greek religion, and in its metaphoric conceptualisation of Christianity as the mother of dissent from God. Most critics perhaps rightfully argue that Fowles's usage of religious symbolism must be -as Fleishman puts it- viewed as metaphorical and not doctrinal.³⁰⁹ Whatever the case might be, Evistic spirituality is continuously suggested throughout these

³⁰⁷Fowles, 1977: 459

³⁰⁸Neary, 1992: 177

³⁰⁹Fleishman, 1976: 300, Neary , 1992:5

novels to provide meaning for the protagonists and serve as a more true alternative mystery. The Fowlesian conflict between Adam and Eve consistently exists, especially in his concept of god.

Fowles's Feminism

"I feel very strongly that reading should almost always be a heuristic ("teaching by revealing self") process. I like it that the Middle Ages literature was in the domain of the clerics or clerks. Of course that religious parallel can lead to mere preaching, didacticism, but I cherish the reminder that we writers have inherited a moral, ethical function."³¹⁰ The words are Fowles's who often boldly insists on his inherent duty as a writer also to be a teacher. In another interview by Fernando Galvan, Fowles divines in a similar manner:

I think it is my duty, my difficult duty, to tell people how they should behave. I don't mean of course being very moralistic, forbidding them all sorts of nice things they want to do. It is really to suggest that just as a road sometimes splits into many forks, there is often one totally clear right road for most of mankind; and that 'good' road I think one does have some right to proclaim. That really is assuming the function of the priest in older times.³¹¹

It is clear that Fowles is not ashamed to confess the element of didacticism in his work. On the contrary he is proud to belong to the small group of people who has the opportunity to influence humanity in what they believe is the right direction. As the extract from *The Aristos* -on which this study is based- displays, Fowles unquestioningly aspires to be a feminist. However, Fowles has expressed his wish to devote himself to feminism in other contexts as well: in an interview with Dianne Vipond, he for instance declares: "I hope I am a feminist writer... True humanism must be feminist."³¹² However, the critical feminist reader is bound to ask her / himself some important questions after a closer reading of his novels. How does his feminism reveal itself through his novels? And what kind of message, if any, does John Fowles' feminism actually convey to his male and female readers? Thomas Foster claims that Fowles throughout his novels aspires to change male

³¹⁰Vipond / Fowles, 1996: 18

³¹¹Galvan, Fernando, "The Writer as a Shaman: A talk by John Fowles, and an Interview" *Revista de la Asociacion Espanola de Estudios Anglo* 14:1-2, 1992: 266

³¹²Vipond / Fowles 1996: 26

attitudes towards women.³¹³ He argues: “A Fowles novel typically explores how men and women treat one another in a world in which the old verities of religion and society seem no longer to obtain.”³¹⁴

Dianne Vipond, writes that John Fowles’s attribution of *The Odyssey* to a female writer, his praise of Marie de France and his, in her words: “generally strong, grounded female characters’ inevitably suggests an egalitarian attitude to women”.³¹⁵ Whether or not his female characters are strong and grounded will be discussed; however, it is possible to find at least one strong rooted feminist among his female characters. A closer look at Rebecca’s religious and political conviction reveals her to be a feminist rebel for her Age. When discussing religion with the conservative 17th century Ayscough, she is not afraid to claim for instance that God is both man and woman, that her religion is not only her father’s but also her mother’s, and perhaps in Ayscough’s eyes her most controversial claim, that Adam and Eve were equally guilty of sin.³¹⁶ The narrator tells us that she is proud before Ayscough and has a directness of look.³¹⁷ In order to emphasise the enormous difference between her own and Ayscough’s perception of her, Fowles has written a piece called “Pretty Miss Catechism” which illustrates the contemporary man’s attitude to women. It is a comic little piece of work which reveals the Age’s unquestionable power of fathers and husbands and its conviction that women’s deepest concern should be to please their husbands. Likewise it takes care to stress the general tendency to believe that religious ruminations were for men alone, since women perhaps did not have a soul like men. Seen in this light one must consider Rebecca as admirably bold when she persists in claiming her rights as a human being as well as a religious fanatic. A passage which especially illustrates her relentless aspiration for democracy and women’s rights is found towards the end of Ayscough’s inquiry. Rebecca exclaims:

A. Thee would snare me. Thee knows not what it is to be woman.

Q I have a wife, and two daughters beside. What is a woman? Mistress, I have heard that riddle, and had it answered.

A. No riddle, as I was used when whore, so I may be used still. And all women beside.

³¹³Foster, 1994: 14

³¹⁴Foster, 1994: 13-14

³¹⁵Vipond / Fowles, 1996: 25

³¹⁶Fowles, 1996: 301, 302, 309

³¹⁷Fowles, 1996: 319, 323

Q. How, all women are whores?

A. Whores in this. We may not say what we believe, nor say what we think, for fear we be mocked because we are women. If men think a thing be so, so must it be, we must obey.

Most of Fowles heroines could be claimed to be feminists. Miranda in *The Collector* is one example. In her captivity she slowly comes to realise:

The power of women! I've never felt so full of mysterious power. Men are a joke. We're so weak physically, so helpless with all things. Still, even today. But we're stronger than they are. We can stand their cruelty. They can't stand ours. I think - I will give myself to G.P. He can have me. And whatever he does to me I shall still have my woman-me he can never touch. All this is wild talk. But I feel full of urges. New independence. I don't think about now. Today. I know I'm going to escape. I feel it. I can't explain. Caliban can never win against me.

Likewise, Sarah in her struggle to release herself from the Victorian Age might be viewed as a feminist, as well as Erato who insists on discussing female suppression with her chauvinistic male coprotagonist Miles Green. Jane moreover insists on her independence and sees a feminist councillor. However, her attempts, as well as her councillor, are generally portrayed as rather pathetic and exaggerated.³¹⁸ Jenny from the same novel, on the other hand, in a manner like her co-muse Erato repeatedly accuses Dan of being a male chauvinist and headstrongly assures him that she refuses to, ever be "only anything in your script. In any of your scripts. Ever again."³¹⁹

It is likewise possible to perceive that most of Fowles's heroines have a psychological advantage over their male oppressors, an advantage which entitles them to be rebellious against male authority and to struggle for individuality. It is for example, clear that in most things, except the physical, Miranda in *The Collector* is indeed superior to her oppressor Clegg. Although her struggle is fruitless, she relentlessly refuses to give in to Clegg's unmerciful demands for her emotional capitulation to his wishes. Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Rebecca in *A Magus* however, both manage to trick and dumbfound men in order to liberate themselves from the tyranny of male suppression. Sarah uses Charles to liberate herself from Christianity and to leave Lyme Regis. Rebecca likewise, despite her outward inferiority, has a sufficient psychological

³¹⁸Fowles, 1977: 642

³¹⁹Fowles, 1977: 472.

advantage over her aggressor Ayscough as well as over her husband as well as over her father which enables her to make her own decisions. As this study has shown neither of these women are afraid to contradict authorities and to choose their own path. Jane in *Daniel Martin* however, is perhaps more resistant than strong or psychologically superior but she is stubborn and persistent.

However, what is important to notice when scrutinising these examples is how specifically their antagonism is addressed towards the Christian religion which to Fowles constitutes Adamism, and how this antagonism towards Christianity characterises the Fowlesian heroine. Jane carries with her a deep, although subdued anger towards Anthony who throughout their marriage has suppressed her with his insistent Adamism. She confides to Dan that the only thing she could really feel after Anthony's death was a diffuse anger churning inside of her.³²⁰ Christianity has destroyed her whole adult life and turned her into a sad, Adamistic woman, and this enrages her. Likewise it is a perverted puritanical Adamism, initially planted in Clegg by his God-fearing aunt, which has literally imprisoned Miranda in Clegg's church vault cellar. To escape this suffocating puritanical male oppression, she takes refuge in her daydreams of the highly Evistic world represented by G.P. and her sister Minnie. Likewise Rebecca, has not only Ayscough to fight but the entire Christian patriarchal society of her age. Also Sarah in *A French Lieutenant's Woman* is in flight from an inhibiting Christian society. Erato in *Mantissa*, ridicules the puritanical staff sister, who reveals herself as representing an unconscious side of Miles, for her Adamistic, archaic view of sexuality.

It is clear that the male Adamist worldview and the female Evistic are inevitably contrasted and an ubiquitous war between the two seem to characterise the Fowlesian novel. The tension reveals itself not only through these women's antagonism towards their male oppressors but also through variations of modes which can be Evistically light and enjoyable such as the green mythic atmosphere of Egypt in *Daniel Martin*, contrasted with the Adamistic first harvest scene characterised by masculine cruelty to animals and the, in this

³²⁰Fowles, 1977: 413

light, rather macabre celebration of the Lord's supper in the same novel. No reader of this essay could have escaped the fact that the favoured opponent in this conflict inevitably remains the Evistic. These sentiments are sufficiently accounted for already in *The Aristos* and its presentation of Adam and Eve. In the following quotation his Evistic proclamations are aggressive and direct:

The petty, cruel and still prevalent antifeminism of Adam-dominated mankind (the very term mankind is revealing) is the long afterglow of the male's once important physical superiority and greater utility in the battle for survival. To the Adam in man, woman is no more than a rapable receptacle. This male association of femininity with rapability extends far beyond the female body. Progress and innovation are rapable; anything not based on brute power is rapable. All progressive philosophies are feminist. Adam is a princeling in a mountain castle; raids and fortifications, his own power and prestige, obsess him.³²¹

This essay has also shown how Fowles consistently portrays his female characters with the distinct Evistic characteristics presented in *The Aristos*. His women are presented as chaotic and rebellious, and as opposed to their male coprotagonists, who generally are described as analytical and scientific, the Fowlesian woman is typically intuitive and emotional. Likewise the Fowlesian heroine is often associated with the tangible and the mundane, and frequently, especially in the love scenes dressed in green, as opposed to the men who seems to possess a closer kinship with God and the divine. As if to emphasise the dark, or snakelike aspect of Eve, Fowles generally clothes his women in dark imagery, a phenomenon which several critics recognise. Her implicit task is to guide her slightly Adamistic, but genuinely Evisticly longing male coprotagonist towards a more Evistic understanding of life. Her genius in this consists of her great capacity to use her sexuality as a means of conviction.

As we have seen, even Eve gods have achieved a place in the atheist John Fowles's heart. The Greek mythology and Elusian mysteries which Fowles implies carry Evistic significance are frequently used throughout Fowles's novels to create true religious mystery and to offer the protagonists moments of epiphany. Just like Eve these religions are signified by their elusive, mysterious and fluid character. As

³²¹Fowles, 1993: 166.

opposed to the fruitless and tyrannous Adamistic religion of Christianity, these religions in fact help the characters to progress and to evaluate their lives in a fruitful way.

There is no question that Fowles, not only in *The Aristos*, but consistently throughout his collection of novels strongly and insistently advocates an Evistic perception of life. His fight for what he perceives as the feminine is radical and persistent.

On the other hand the critical feminist reader is bound to ask her / himself what message this imagery ultimately conveys to the reader, and what its function is. Is Fowles's underlying motive really to glorify women and their dark potentialities or could it be something else? First of all, is being depicted as a dark subversive, hopelessly erotic figure whose principal task is to lead the male protagonist away from the Christian God really a flattering portrayal? There is no doubt that in Fowles's mind it certainly was supposed to be. However, when investigating Fowles's general portrayal of woman and comparing these dark ladies to their male counterparts, the Eve men and other, not so sympathetic and beautiful female characters such as Adam women, the overall image of womanhood conveyed through Fowles's fiction becomes not only stereotypical but rather chauvinistic.

When scrutinising Fowles's feminism, or Evism we are bound to ask ourselves, why Fowles so consistently portrays Eve-women as immensely inferior to the Eve-men. What kind of message does Fowles erotic women, who consistently use their bodies, give to male and female readers about women, and why is it so that the Eve-man never uses his body to attempt to accomplish his goals if using your body to reach your goals shouldn't be considered degrading and demeaning? Why are Fowles's male Evistic characters consistently wise older men with an impressive education or authority such as The Professor in *Daniel Martin*, Dr Grogan in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Bartholomew in *A Maggot* and G.P. in *The Collector* whereas his Eve-women are young women who have no other authority than her own intuition and beauty to rely on? If the Evistic life force among other things brings sexual freedom, why does this freedom in Fowles's world take expression in rather stereotypical portrayals of Eve women as young nymphs and Eve men as old

rakes? Why are middle aged women almost totally excluded in this, except for Jane who also has to undergo a long transformation into something like a young sexual ideal? Moreover, why are Adam-women and Adam-men so consistently portrayed in such a bad manner, and even more importantly, why are middle-aged women so consistently puritanical, dirt obsessed and pathetic, and young, beautiful men such as Piers in *The Collector* and The Prick in *Daniel Martin* consistently portrayed as silly, stupid and psychologically ugly?

The only credible answer to these questions is that for Fowles, the struggle for Evism seems far more important than the struggle for creating a fair basic view of men and women and their equal value as human beings. Hence, there is a huge important difference between a feminism which proclaims Fowles's concept of Evism and a feminism which strives to attain women's right to equality. The most important difference in this respect is that his struggle pro Evism seems to such an enormous extent to be based on his desire to criticise Christianity. Therefore he has created sympathetic, beautiful, mysterious, young women, to represent the Eve-side which he desires the reader to sympathise with, and phoney, dirt obsessed psychologically ugly, middle aged women: "garrulous old spinsters" to represent the Christian side which Fowles desires his readers not to sympathise with. What he may not realise is that this kind of propaganda not only serves his primary goal, namely to create a horrifying image of Christians and Christianity but as such reinforces a view of women as useless after having reached a certain age. It is sad that a writer who claims to be a feminist so studiously devotes his novels to creating such a degrading image of womanhood. Where his male characters are concerned, the only possible reason for portraying young, beautiful men as phoney Adamists and Eve-men as middle aged, wise gurus with an incredible potentiality to attract young beautiful women, must be to flatter himself in his own role as a middle aged men.

The male egomaniac that needs young muses in their stories to satisfy some deep male psychological need is something which the feminist Fowles willingly analyses and discusses with great severity with his readers. His self revealing essay on Thomas Hardy is a great example of this. In this essay, which for Fowles seems almost as much an analysis of his own mind as of Hardy's, he frequently compares his own narrative

techniques with Thomas Hardy's. One of these similarities is their habit of creating enclosed green mythic encounters between a man and a woman, such as Hardy's tryst and Fowles's green Garden of Eden. Fowles moreover shares how he once had the opportunity to be psychoanalysed by a Professor Rose. He then proceeds to describe the theory, a theory which he admits to find: "a plausible and valuable model"³²². The theory seems very much to be influenced by Jung, and argues that the writer is a person who more than others has retained a memory of extreme infancy to the first period of awareness that he and the mother are two identities. Therefore, according to this theory the artist, through his stories, takes the reader back to the old magic which he once experienced in his mother's womb and in her presence. Fowles moreover explains that the main source for this important journey is the female, young, sexual ideal that we have been discussing. He explains:

This relationship is in my experience a far more important consideration in the writing and shaping of a novel than most critics and biographers seem prepared to allow. We must also remember that the voyage undertaken is back to an indulged primal self and all its pleasures, and that the main source of those pleasures was that eternal other woman, the mother. The vanished young mother of infancy is quite as elusive as the Well-Beloved- indeed, she *is* the Well-Beloved, although the adult writer transmogrifies her according to the pleasures and fancies that have in the older man superseded the nameless ones of the child- most commonly into a young female sexual ideal of some kind, to be attained or pursued (or denied) by himself hiding behind some male character.³²³

What is somewhat difficult to grasp here is that this text, which first of all defends, and even advocates the great importance of creating a clearly sexist image of womanhood, and which studiously persists in excluding women both as possible readers and as possible writers of a novel, is indeed written by someone who calls himself a feminist. If Fowles had chosen from the beginning to explain that this might be a theory which helps understand why some male writers and likewise their male readers are attracted by this young, female sexual ideal, then perhaps his arguments could be acceptable; however, this is not the case here, instead Fowles takes care to explain his consistent usage of the word he for writer:

³²²Fowles, 1977: 31 Hardy and the Hag

³²³Fowles, 1977: 33, Hardy and the Hag

Sensitive female readers may not be very happy about the pronoun of this paragraph, but the theory helps explain why all through more recent human history men seem better adapted -or more driven- to individual artistic expression than women. Professor Rose points out that the chance of being conditioned by this primal erotic experience is (if one accepts Freudian theory) massively loaded towards the son.³²⁴

The habit of not viewing woman as a potential writer, reader, or real character also reveals itself in Fowles's portrayal of woman as the hero's agent of redemption. John Heagert is one critic who has recognised this and points it out:

Mysterious, subversive, often melodramatic figures, the dark ladies of his fiction have been typically instrumental in expanding the hero's consciousness and alerting him to the reality's unexpected "monstrousness" and "vigour". For that very reason, however, the heroine herself has become one of the least free of Fowles's literary characters... On the one hand, he has been clearly committed to casting his heroines as "free" characters, characters who determine their own destinies and write their own stories. The fact, on the other hand, that he has regularly deployed the heroine in the service of his hero has had the effect of subverting her freedom on behalf of her function. Despite, the reverent lyricism often lavished on Sarah, Julie, Alison, Jane and their illustrious sisters, they remain, as it were, indentured to the text: less a "constant reality" in their own right than a bright accessory- in a double sense- to the central action, which is the heroes movement into authentic selfhood and freedom.³²⁵

Thomas C. Foster compares Fowles's heroine Sarah to the Pre-Raphaelites idea of sacred and mythic womanhood chiefly based on a foreignness or otherness to men.³²⁶ However, as Haegert also suggests above, it is clear that this image of mythic womanhood is applied to most of Fowles heroines. In an interview with Dianne Vipond Fowles is confronted with Pamela Cooper's accusations that his female characters are "essentially passive" and "objects of male desire or inspirational muse figures" and "not independently creative in themselves". Fowles answers this accusation by acknowledging and stressing his perception of woman as other: "This reproach is probably justified. In part it's because woman remains very largely a mystery to me- or perhaps I should be more honest and admit that this mysteriousness has always seemed to me partly erotic."³²⁷ In Fowles's fictional world woman, by the authority of her inevitable otherness, becomes a goddess whose greatest significance is to serve men and guide them towards a greater understanding of life. The initial idea behind this concept of woman might have been to elevate woman, at least the young, mythic,

³²⁴Fowles, 1977: 41, Hardy and the Hag

³²⁵Haegert, 1986: 168

³²⁶Foster, 1994: 74

³²⁷Vipond / Fowles, 1996: 26

erotic concept of woman, to a higher level than men- capable of rescuing men from a life in Adamism. However, what Fowles fails, or ignores to realise is that by focusing on man's psychological development and by characterising women as mysteriously mythic, elusive and other, he berefts her of her natural status as a human being and reduces her to another species. It is in this respect more or less insignificant whether she is idealised or degraded, she is still degraded by exclusion.

Most importantly, Fowles fails to realise that he, in his eagerness to proclaim Evism, instead of breaking new ground for a new concept of womanhood which his ideas concerning the male and female presented in *The Aristos* might initially have been intended to do, instead supports and continues to write in an old male tradition which views women as idealised love object or whores and who views the good woman as man's saving angel who by means of her patience and goodness eventually will rescue the rake (the Adamist in Fowles's case) for goodness, (or Evishness). Moreover, Fowles has, by characterising his mythic, female characters as implicitly Evistic and akin to the serpent, totally uninterested in the Christian God, passed on a historical view of women's religiosity which he himself aspires to criticise in *A Maggot* where he argues that women perhaps do not have a soul, and that man stand next to God. It is true that this godlessness can be intended to celebrate women's higher intelligence in this matter; however the idea is still based on exclusion.

Lance St John Butler, another of Fowles critics notes that: "Fowles is an enigma in broad daylight. He is exceptionally open about his feelings and opinions, yet it is hard to be absolutely certain that one has understood his work or his position in post- 1960s fiction... Much of his work seems to have a left wing or feminist bias, yet he can also be seen as crypto-fascist and sexist."³²⁸ By all means, Fowles indisputable devotion to Evism has driven him to create strong rebellious Evists such as Rebecca in *A Magus*. On the other hand it is clear that this Evism in much is entirely based on antipathy towards Christianity. Gian Balsamo does not see the paradox in Fowles's feminism and suggests that Fowles is not sexist. He argues that Fowles must

³²⁸ Butler, St John. "How to travel in time: John Fowles and History" *Historicite et Metafiction dans le roman contemporain des Iles Britanniques* 1994:62

be aware of his own stereotypical portrayal of women. He furthermore argues that his portrayals of women are justified because he writes in a specific literary tradition and because his imagery in this context ultimately symbolises something else.³²⁹ John Haegert both criticises and defends Fowles and argues that one of Fowles's last published novels, *Mantissa*, seems to be a selfscrutinising "critique of everything he had come to believe about the authority of women in his fiction" and that this novel is an attempt to rewrite his heroine and "re-establish her as the first principle and matrix of his art"³³⁰ However, what Haegert does not recognise is that Fowles in no way excuses himself for stereotyping beautiful, intuitive, women as God haters. Erato in *Mantissa* is still as Haegert also puts it a "hopelessly erotic" muse who despises her older female puritanical colleague; the staff sister for her inhibited, outmoded view of sexuality and who portrays her first lover, which is Adam, as a rapist, just like Fowles does in his account of Adam and Eve in *The Aristos*.³³¹

There is no question that Fowles is a devoted advocator of Evism; a concept which he himself has invented, based on atheism or anti-Christianity. It is also true that he has created a long row of angry women to proclaim it. The only question is, does Evism belong to the category of feminism? To conclude this chapter the only possible answer to that question must be that a feminism so much based on a purely philosophical conviction, so much propagated for by sexist imagery and so blurred by the transparent sexism of its propagator can hardly be called feminism in any true sense. However, its grounder and propagator, John Fowles is convinced it is the right road for mankind, and he does have some right to proclaim it, just like the ancient priests and clerks he so intensively strives to criticise.

³²⁹Balsamo, 1991: 142- 143

³³⁰Haegert, 1986: 175, 181.

³³¹Haegert, 1986: 174

Conclusion

A journey into the mind of John Fowles can be both elusive and illuminative. His novels are compact with imagery and symbolism which inevitably encourages a thematic reading of his works. One of these elusive, yet clear themes is that of Adam and Eve. The theme is first presented in *The Aristos*, where Fowles chooses to interpret the Biblical myth of Adam and Eve as a theory of sexual contrasts. Eve -the female- is according to this theory, emotional, chaotic, imaginative, mothering and understanding, and gifted with an inherent ability to guide and lead Adam out of Garden of Eden. Adam -the male- is according to the theory an unimaginative and analytical antifeminist, tyrannical, militantly rapacious or destructive and obsessed with order and rules. Fowles's theory of the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve moreover serves as a strong criticism of Christianity and its perception of God. Adam's resentment personifies the Christian God and imagination and progress is personified by the Evisitic Serpent. The theory consistently elaborates the idea of a male and a female perception of life as a whole. Fowles accordingly introduces his own notion of Adam women and Eve men as well as on Adam Gods and Eve Gods.

A closer study of Fowles' canon reveals a consistent usage of the theory's idea of The Garden of Eden. A typical Fowlesian plot consists of a man attracted to a woman. The man is imprisoned in Christian convention; the male dream of a Garden of Eden which is Christianity. The woman, literally and metaphorically seduces the hero to fall, e.i. to progress or evolve towards another, more Evisitic perception of life. Green mythic meeting places serve as alternative Garden of Eden in which the hero's mental progress might take place. The mental fall is preeliminated by a sexual fall.

It is likewise clear that the characteristics of Adam and Eve as presented in the theory are consistently applied to Fowles male and female characters throughout his canon. The Fowlesian heroine is characterised

by her irresistible youth, beauty and mysteriousness and by her implicit role in guiding the hero on his journey to progress. She is imaginative and emotional, and she persistently objects to male order and the rules to which she is subjected. The male hero does possess the typically Adamite characteristics ascribed him; however he evolves throughout the canon. It is possible to perceive that he develops from cold blooded Adamism as in the hero of *The Collector* - towards elusive Evishness as in the hero of *A Maggot*. However, the developed hero is continually contrasted to Adamistic men such as Anthony in *Daniel Martin* and Ayscough in *A Maggot* who, like Clegg in *The Collector*, are implicitly unsympathetic analytical, scientific and self obsessed male chauvinists, obsessed with rules, convention and above all Christianity. Like Adam these typically Adamistic men are closely associated with the Christian God, whereas the Eves have a nature which bears much greater resemblance to the Serpent and the dark.

Fowles concept of male and female gods, likewise reveals itself to be inextricably intertwined with his notions of Adam and Eve. Like the extreme Adam; Clegg, Anthony or Ayscough, the Adam religion which exclusively seems to be the Christian is presented as severe, empty and meaningless, even evil and diabolic. It is interesting to notice however that the portrayal of alternative religions, continually associated with Eve characteristics sensuality, darkness and mystery such as the Elusians' worship of the dark earth mother, classic Greek mythology and tarot mystery is conveyed in an unexpectedly positive manner by the atheist John Fowles. His characters inevitably find recreation in these religions which indeed, as opposed to Christianity, do meet their unfulfilled need of mystery.

It is possible to perceive that Fowles, in accordance with *The Aristos*, likewise applies his concept of Eve men and Adam women to characters in his novels. This is especially evident in the case of Eve men. The Eve group of men are recognised by their Evish characteristics, their association with Evish religions, but above all by their authority as great progressive artists and thinkers. The Adam women group accordingly is recognised by its characters's association with the Christian religion. A closer study of these two groups moreover reveals that Eve men, similarly to Eve women, are portrayed in a distinctly positive manner,

whereas Adam women systematically are portrayed in a negative mode. It is imperative to notice that both these groups to a large extent consist of middle aged characters. However, whereas the middle aged Adam women generally are described as worn out and pathetic women, the middle aged Eve men on the contrary have aged well into virile, charming men. The most important difference between Eve men and Eve women lies in their different way of guiding the hero. Whereas the young and mysterious Eve leads the hero towards self-reliance and an understanding of the non-existence of God by means of seduction, the middle aged Eve man relies on his pathos as a great progressive artist, thinker and mentor.

This important distinction between both Eve men and Eve women and between Eve men and Adam women, together with an unquestioningly stereotypical portrayal of both Eve women and Adam men, and his ideological and religious viewpoint so extremely intertwined in his concept of these gender roles, unquestioningly leads the critical feminist reader to question the motives of Fowles's feminism so emphasised in *The Aristos*. His consistent and extremely familiar portrayal of young, elusive, mysteriously erotic womanhood, together with his habit of focusing on the male hero's psychological development, which according to his own essay "Hardy and the Hag" resides in his perception of writers and readers as predominantly men also rhymes badly with his assertion of proclaiming feminism. It is possible to perceive that his strong women are strong mostly in their resistance towards Christianity, and that Fowles in his eagerness to proclaim his self invented concept of Evism as being so inextricably intertwined with religion, seems to have forsaken traditional feminist ideals. Instead Fowles's woman have become an instrument for the benefit of the development of the man, a nymph, a goddess or a pathetic, middle aged Christian. Young and Evish, old and Adamist, concepts of womanhood as old as they are sexist unquestioningly serve as instruments to proclaim the ideological and religious concept of Evism, but not of feminism.

This essay has illustrated that Fowles does use his theory on Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden in his fiction. It is possible to detect a consistent appliance of the ideas and concepts underlying the theory throughout his whole canon. It is even possible to trace continuity in the development of the protagonists

throughout his works, starting with the Adamite Clegg in *The Collector* and ending with the Evistic Bartholomew in *A Maggot*. As has been shown the theory is traceable in the characterisation of both men and women, in the canon's overall treatment of religion and feminist values and even in the very storyline of the books.

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